787 Amongst the Ba-Ronga the ill-omen is not considered so serious.
782 Later on, when the child loses his first teeth, he must not
856 let them fall out hap-hazard anywhere. He must take the fallen tooth, go to the ash-heap, put his finger into the hole and say : "Kokwa, kokwa, ndji hwe hobe !" (Grandfather, grandfather, give me a grain of maize !) Then he throws the tooth over his shoulder on to the ashes and goes home without looking backward. Should he look backward, his grandfather (the spirit of the departed ?) would not give him a new tooth (1). This custom is no longer taboo and is disappearing.

856 When a younger brother cuts his teeth, they are considered
163 as pushing away or pulling out the teeth of the elder, as the younger brother comes into the world, as a rule, three years after the elder.

As regards *hair*, the first cutting is accompanied by the following
302 custom : the mother sprinkles some drops of her milk on the
856 forehead and on the occiput of the child ; then she cuts his hair and throws it away in the midst of thick grass. When she cuts her own hair, she always leaves a lock on both sides of the head for the amusement of the child, till he is able to walk.

853 Nursing women very often anoint themselves with ochre. This is said to be in order to prevent their husbands from having relations with them.

These rites are not considered as very important. But there are three others which are most punctiliously observed, and which divide the nursing period into three subperiods : the presentation to the moon, after three months, the tying of the cotton string, after one year, and the weaning ceremonies at the close of the period.

4) The presentation to the moon (ku yandla).

821 The appearance of the new moon is always received with cheers by the Ba-Ronga. The first person who sees it shouts :

(1) Comparative Ethnography : I remember quite well that, when I was a boy, we were told in Neuchâtel that we must not let a broken tooth get lost, lest it should be found by a dog and a dog's tooth would grow in its stead !

851 a grown up child (1). The expression *fuya ñwana* confirms our explanation. This custom is not a protective rite : the physician has nothing to do with it ; it is really an act by which the new-born child becomes a regular member of the community. The strict prohibition of renewed conception before this rite has been accomplished is evidently dictated by the feeling that another child must not appear before this one has been duly received into the family.

6) The weaning.

862 856 A whole year, even more, will elapse after the *boha puri* before the little one can be weaned. He will learn to speak and to walk, and it is only when his intelligence is sufficiently developed to allow him to run small errands that the date of the weaning will be fixed. When his parents can send him to the next hut to ask for snuff and see him coming back holding the tobacco, they say : "Now the time has come !"

The rite of weaning is accomplished in the following manner in Nondwane. (Mboza).

862 824 First of all, the father looks for a young *ntjopfa* tree which has only one root. The ntjopfa is an anonacea bush, which colonists sometimes call the wild custard. (Its fruit is very much like custard fruit and it is said that the true cultivated custard can be grafted on it). The root of this tree is said to have the property of making people forget. The mother cooks a pot of Kafir corn in which she has put the medicine. This

862 782 735 will help the child to forget the breast. But the great act is the *hondlola* which takes place under the direction of the physician. The mother pounds some mealies, pours water on them and adds some leaven ; in this way she makes a little light beer (buputju). She keeps a little of the bran of the pounded mealies. The doctor comes, kills a chicken and sprinkles this bran with the blood and *hahla*, viz. offers a regular sacrifice. He prays to the spirits of his own family and asks those of the child's family to

(1) This word *khuna* is also employed to designate boys who have not yet gone through the circumcision school. *Bukhuna* is the despicable state of uncircumcision. The state of a child before the ceremony of *boha puri* is another kind of bukhuna.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

862 join with them in blessing the little one. The beak of the sacrificed
782 hen, one of the claws and one of the feathers (psirungulo) will be
735 tied together round the child's neck. A mat is spread on the ground ; the child is laid on it and greased with oil and powder brought by the physician. Then he is smeared and rubbed with the bran. The particles which fall on the mat are called *timhore*. They are gathered by the mother who makes a ball of them. In the meantime the father looks for the nest of a certain kind of large ant which is common in the bush. It lives in the earth, but the opening of its hole is tolerably large. There the mother goes at sunset. She introduces the ball into the hole so that the ant will be obliged to take all the *timhore* into the nest. Then she returns home without looking behind her. It is taboo ; should she transgress this rule, she would bring back disease to her child.

This rite is the ordinary *hondlola rite* which is performed in this or in a similar way at the close of any serious disease as the conclusion of the treatment, with the view of taking away the defilement of disease. After having *hondlola*, the physician asks for the payment of his fees. For a child he will ask ten shillings or five coins of five hundred reis (1).

854 This hondlola reveals to us the true conception of the nursing period held by the Natives. For them these three first years of the child's life are a period of disease ; so many perils threaten the little one's well-being that he can hardly be considered healthy. He is during the whole time under the supervision of the physician, who takes leave of the little patient on the day of the weaning.

854 This view of infancy accounts also for some other taboos. It
789 is *yila* for instance to say of a child who is particularly fat : Wa tika, he is heavy : this would bring mishap to him. One must say : A kota ribye, he is like a stone! It is taboo also in Shiluvane to make use before a child of the word *mfene*, baboon. There is a disease which is called by that name and it would come upon him. One must say : the thing which inhabits the hills, and so on...

(1) In the Mpfumu clan the rite of weaning is somewhat different. I have published in " Les Ba-Ronga " a description of it given by Tobane. It seems that the elements of the cotton string rite and of the broken pot rite are mixed with the proper weaning rite. I think that the description of Mboza is more trustworthy.

585 girls, the stout women with strong arms, go and look for the
578 heroine of the day, who is hidden in a hut in one of the neighbouring villages, and who has not yet been seen. At last they succeed in finding her. She refuses to come. The viragos seize her and pull her out by force. Everybody assembles. She is covered with a large cloth which hides her from the gaze of the bystanders. Surrounded on all sides, she sets forward to the village, the crowd forming a kind of procession. " Let us accompany her, then we shall return home " sing the women who bring her. (A hi mu tjekeleni, hi ta muka). This song of the *tjeka*, the only one which is peculiar to the wedding day, is the prelude to a most strange duel.

The bridegroom's family stands on one side, that of the bride on the other, and then begins the exchange of equivocal compliments.

"Ha!" cry the groomsmen to the bride, "as you are becoming the wife of our brother and coming into our village, try and leave all your vices outside. Do not steal any longer! Forsake your bad ways and become a good girl! "

To this the bride's relatives shout in return :

" You have nothing to boast about! Stop wearying the people! She is far too good for you! Does not everybody know the wild pranks of your son and the dishonour of your family! "

And they go on in this way, at first in joke, but often speaking seriously. They sometimes even go so far as to bombard each other with the half digested matter which has been extracted from the goat's stomach, but, if anyone goes too far and exceeds the recognized limit of insult, the old people will tell him to be quiet.
585 These proceedings however are looked upon as a game and are
535 accompanied with a particular dance called *khana* which consists in jumping first on one leg and then on the other, gesticulating at the same time.

e) The religious act.

585 The procession reaches the hut of the bride's mother, where
782 the goat was killed. Mats are stretched outside. The bride and
769 groom sit down on the finest of these. It is now that the father

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

585 782 769 performs the religious rite (hahla). He takes between his first finger and thumb a small quantity of the half digested grass which has been taken from the paunch of the animal, makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue with it and emits a sound resembling " tsu "... as if he were slightly spitting. This is the customary sacramental act in most of the sacrifices. (See Part VI.) He stands behind the wedding pair and, looking straight in front of him towards them, speaks to the gods, that is to say to the spirits of his ancestors, and says : " My fathers, my grandfathers (he calls them by their names) look! To-day my child is leaving me. She enters the wedded life (bukatin). Look at her, accompany her where she will live. May she also found a village, may she have many children (mu nyikan timbeleko), may she be happy, good and just. May she be on good terms with those with whom she will be ". Here it may happen that a brother of the bridegroom will interrupt and say : " Yes, we will live peacefully with her if she does her duty well and does not worry her husband ". The old man goes on with his patriarchal prayer without taking any notice of the interruption and everybody listens quietly and attentively. This prayer which he pronounces with his eyes wide open and in a most natural manner is sometimes very long. When the people have had enough of it and wish him to stop, they send a young man to cut a piece of meat and to put it into the old man's mouth. Thus they " cut " his prayer and he keeps still. The person officiating must be the first to partake of the meat of the sacrifice.

f) The symbolical belt.

585 777 825 The astragalus (nhlolo) of the right leg of the sacrificed goat has been carefully kept. All along the belly they cut a strip of skin reaching as far as the neck and up to the chin, which is cut so as to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into this pocket and the father ties the belt around the waist of the young woman. He must not look at her face to face in doing this. On the contrary, she must turn her

765 less out of shape. In the end they brought axes and chopped all round, about half way up the cone, and with loud shouts brought the destroyed hut level with the ground. Everything belonging to it will be left there to rot. No one dares to remove or to burn this ruin. It is a taboo (1).

The men were satisfied. They had succeeded : "The mourning had not overcome them," (nkosi a wu ba hlulanga), as would have been the case had one of them met with an accident during the operation. Some pots full of water were brought and they washed their hands and their faces conscientiously. They retired a while and all the members of the family, the women included, came and settled themselves as shown on the accompanying illustration of the scene. In front of the crushed hut *(1)*, in the space between it and the small hut of the first widow *(3)*, the old men sat down *(4)*, near them the *batukulu*, viz. the uterine nephews of the deceased *(5)*, their wives, and a few old women *(6)*. The other men *(10)* and women of mature age *(9)* took their places between the neighbouring huts, leaving a wide place for the dance.

765 782 The brother of the deceased, Fenis, brought on his shoulders a young goat. Two hens and a cock were provided, in all two male and two female offerings. Some branches covered with leaves were spread before the heaps of poles *(2)*, and the *batukulu* began to kill the victims. One of them took the cock by the legs, his brother held the head and cut the neck half through. At each cut of the knife, all the women uttered their *mikulungwana* (piercing cries). He threw the fowl down, still alive and panting. They did the same with the three fowls, everybody laughing and amused at seeing them jump before they died. Then one of the *batùkulu* seized the goat by one of the forelegs, lifted it up as high as he could, and planted an assagai under its shoulders, trying to reach the heart. The face of the goat was turned towards the North (2). At once more mikulugwane! The animal was crying

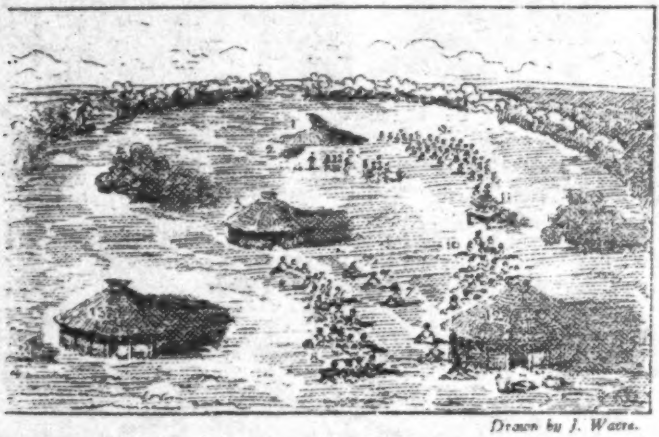
(1) In a neighbouring district, one of our evangelists built a chapel near the ruin of the chief Gwaba. For months it was impossible to remove that ugly decaying roof : those on the spot were opposed to it and the chieftainess of the Mabota district gave permission only because the evangelist was connected with White people.

(2) I suppose the Manyibane family came from the North, and they wanted the goat to cry in this direction to call the spirits of the ancestors to the sacrifice.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

765
782

pitifully ; its agony lasted five minutes at least and the whole time the women were shouting with pleasure, because it is necessary that a victim should cry! In the groups, men and women were discussing where and how the sacrificer ought to introduce the blade in order to kill the goat more quickly. His wife came and



Drawn by J. Watts.

The ceremony of crushing down the hut

1. Deceased's hut, crushed down. 2. Heap of posts. 3. Provisional hut of the widow. 4. Sacrificer. 5. Uterine nephews. 6. Wives of the uterine nephews. 7. Dancers. 8. Women clapping their hands. 9. Other women. 10. Men. 11. Henhouse. 12. Hut of the younger brother. 13. Hut of the tall woman who danced. 14. A "shigiyane", wood pile built by her daughter-in-law's relatives.

helped him, and not until after ten minutes, at least, did they succeed.

765
535
831

Then, while the batukulu and the old men were busy with the victims, cutting them up and squeezing the psanyi (half digested grass) out of the bowels, the other mourners began to sing and to dance. First an elderly woman, of a very clear complexion and a mephistophelean face, very tall, with a curiously licentious smile, came into the middle of the place, opened her arms wide and *suma*, began to sing. Together with her song she performed a strange mimicry with her thighs. This mimicry took on a more and more lascivious character ; it became a regular

765 535 831 womb dance, so immoral (Annotatio 9)[1] that the men dropped their eyes, as if they feared that she would take off all her clothing. But the other women seemed thoroughly to enjoy this horrible performance, and encouraged her by clapping their hands and beating their drums. The words of her songs were also of a very questionable character. She described an adulterous woman going during the night from one hut to another, seeking for lovers, knocking on the walls (to attract the notice of the men ?).

> The walls of the huts have deceived her fellow-women when she goes knocking on them...

Another old woman, of at least seventy years of age, followed her, and running with a mincing gait through the place, uttered words of the same kind.

This seems very immoral indeed. Let us remember however that, in the opinion of the Thongas, these songs, which are taboo in ordinary life, are specially appropriate to the mourning period "These women have been uncovered by the death of their husband," said Mboza. "There is no longer any restraint on them. They are full of bitterness when they perform these lascivious dances." The reason is perhaps deeper, as it is not only the widows who sing these words ; we are still in a marginal period, the period of mourning, and these phases of life are marked for the Bantus by this strange contrast : prohibition of sexual intercourse and a shameless outpouring of impure words and gesticulations (Annotatio 10).[2]

765 782 But in the meantime the *batukulu* had finished their work. They had already distributed the various parts of the victim according to rule, to the visitors, who would eat them on their way home, not in the village ; it is taboo. They had put aside one shoulder, the lungs and one of the hoofs for the sacrifice. Relatives had made a provision of *psanyi*. An old man then took a pill made of the *psanyi*, that found in the smallest stomach, called shihlakahla. He pressed it against his lips, took into his mouth a little of the liquid squeezed from it and spit it out again with the sacramental *tsu*. He then proceeded to pray : "You, Manyiban, you have left us. People used to say you were a

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

2 [See pp 517-518 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

765 wizard (a clever man who could overcome death). In what has
782 your witchcraft resulted ? Are you not dead! You have left us in peace. Go to Tlotlomane ; let Tlotlomane go to X ; let X go to Y, etc. (He utters the names of the ancestors.) Call each other to come here and look. Are we not gathered together ? Here is so and so. The batukulu also are here. Accept this offering and may we live peacefully together : visit each other (Annotatio 11)[1]. Even if they do not come to pay me visits, let them come to Fenis ; he is their father now. And you, Mugwanu, you remain at the head of the village. You are their headman now. Do not scatter your people. Cultivate good relations with each other."

765 But a woman suddenly stands up and interrupts him : "Bring
543 everything to the light," she says! The old priest stops. She
578 goes on : "They say I am a Muchopi" (a woman of dissolute manners). The mikulungwane are heard on all sides. It is a family drama which we are attending! This woman is the daughter of the deceased : Manyibane has sold her to pay off his debts ; he has not kept the lobola money to buy a wife for one of her brothers ; that is the reason why they hate her. They do not receive her in the village. She pours out her grievances before them in this family gathering, when they are praying to their ancestors. It is the favourable time! She goes on : "Is it my fault ? Did I not obey our father ? I have not fled away. Now what am I to do ? He alone received me here! You despise me. Say everything! Do not hide it!"

Her interruption has lasted five minutes at least and she goes back to her place very angry. Sometimes relatives who have serious complaints to make against their kinsfolk choose this precise moment to vent their anger and leave the gathering with violent words. In such a case, it is said : "The mourning has overcome this family."

765 The old priest is a little disconcerted. He speaks at random,
782 always calling his Tlotlomane. The whole scene is perfectly natural, but the participants do not show the slightest religious awe. Suddenly one of the batukulu rises, takes a bottle of wine which has been also brought there as an offering, pours a

[1] [See p. 518 in these categories or in M-Analyst]

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

765 782 604 little of it into a glass and raises it to the lips of the old man. "He cuts his prayer" and while all the attention of the public is concentrated upon this act (which belongs also to the ritual, as the priest must be the first to partake of the offering), the wives of the batukulu rush towards the shoulders, lungs and hoofs of the goats and the bottle of wine, seize them and run away towards the west. They have stolen the meat of the sacrifice! At once all stand up and follow them laughing, shouting and pelting them with the *psanyi*, which they had kept for this purpose. The thieves hide themselves behind some bush and eat the meat. Uterine nephews are representatives of the gods, as we shall see later on, and they assert their right by stealing the offering and eating it up.

This ceremony is highly characteristic as it embodies some of the principal ideas of the Thongas in the domain of religion, social life and taboo. It was worth while describing it, and we shall refer to it later on, when dealing with sacrifices and the position of the uterine nephews in the family.

765 292 554 825 The crushing down of the hut is not performed in exactly the same manner amongst the Ba-Ronga. In the clans *South of the Bay*, they only *close* it (pfala yindlu). They dig holes in front of the door, into which they insert poles of the bush called *nhleka*, tying thorny branches horizontally to them. The shield of the deceased is placed against the door. The religious rite then takes place and from the skins of the sacrificed goats strips are cut, which the widows will have to wear *en bandoulière* during the following months of their widowhood. The astragalus bones are kept and hung round the neck. The gall-bladder is also preserved and fixed in the hair of the new master of the village as a sign of his new position.

765 596 In the *district of Makaneta*, on the estuary of the Nkomati, the ceremony comprises two successive acts. First there is also a *provisory closing* of the hut, which can take place one month after the death and is accompanied by the family gathering and the religious ceremony. One year later, when the inheritance is adjudicated, the hut is crushed down, but only if it belonged to a headman of the village and if the kraal is obliged to move in

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

consequence of the death. If it be the hut of one of the subordinates, the roof is simply lifted off and thrown away into the bush.

Another very significant rite in connexion with the closing of the hut is accomplished on the death of the master of the village. A branch is cut from the tree of the village, the tree which was revealed by the divinatory bones as the one near which the headman had to build (See Part II Ch. II); half of the branch is placed across the great gate of the village, which is then closed and another gate opened, at some distance, in the fence; the other half is put over the door of the crushed hut.

There seem to be great variations in the performance of these ceremonies everywhere. I believe, without being able to vouch for it, that when two family gatherings take place during this last period of the mourning, the first is held to proclaim the new master of the village and the second to distribute the inheritance amongst the heirs-at-law. At any rate these two important acts take place at the gatherings. As the inheritance consists mainly of live stock — human stock, the wives of the deceased, I shall describe the adjudication when treating of the fate of widows.

2) Family rites in the Northern clans.

A month after the burial, there is a first gat[illegible] of the grave-diggers. They are invited by the widows t[illegible] feast. This beer is called: "the beer of the hyenas," as the hyenas also dig graves! No equivocal compliment is intended, the widows merely meaning to thank these men for their services.

In the northern clans, *yindlu a yi yili*, the hut is not taboo. It can be slept in again after the five days of the Great Mourning. The plaster of the doorposts is repaired, and a new crown is put on the top when the hut again finds an owner (1). The feast of the

(1) The hut of a leper alone is considered irremediably tabooed as the sufferer is buried in it. They dig a hole into which he is pushed by means of sticks. The roof is crushed down over him.

765 782 closing of the hut is therefore replaced by what is called the *beer of the mourning* (byala bya nkosi). All the relatives, brothers, brothers-in-law, nephews, etc., bring a goat, or half a sovereign, or a sovereign, to the master of the mourning, the heir of the village. That individual must give them back as much as he receives from them, a goat for a goat, (timbuti ti labana), a sovereign for a sovereign, and all the animals are killed according to rule. There were fourteen of them at a certain gathering held in the Nkuna capital to mourn one of the wives of the chief Shiluvane in 1905. A sacrifice is offered ; the men sit on one side, the women on the other ; the *kokwane*, viz. the maternal uncle of the deceased, takes the *psanyi* and squeezes it on them all while praying, or rather insulting the gods who have afflicted them with such a bereavement. All rub their chests with this green liquid and add their insults to those of the priest.

[775] According to Viguet, this is the first occasion on which the deceased is treated as a god and prayed to : "Look! You have left the village without a head to lead it! Keep them! Bless them and increase them." The *batukulu* then come to take that portion of the victim which has been put aside for the gods. It does not appear that they steal it, as is the case amongst the Ba-Ronga.

* * *

765 Such is the story of the mourning. Here are some technical expressions in connexion with it : Hamba nkosi, to conduct the mourning. Djila nkosi, to utter mourning lamentations. Daha nkosi, to treat it by purification ceremonies. Kota nkosi, to cope with it. Nkosi wu wupfa, it ripens. Nkosi wu hela, it comes to an end. A wu boli, it does not get rotten, viz. it is always possible to pay a mourning visit.

The name of the deceased when quoted is often preceded by the word "Matjuwa," exactly as with *feu* in French and *late* in English. In the Northern clans the expression employed is "Sira" which means grave : Grave so and so.

5) Sterility.

842 782 In the Northern clans, when a woman does not conceive, a special sacrifice is offered, very similar to the one made by the Rongas on the day of the conclusion of the marriage. A goat is killed; a long piece, one foot in width, is cut from the skin of the animal in the ventral region, and three openings are made, one for the head and the two others for the arms. The three openings converge to a point where the astragalus bone of the goat is fixed to a strap. The sterile woman puts on this skin; the astragalus will be seen on her breast. She will also fix the gall-bladder in her hair and wear these ornaments for a time. To the mind of the Thongas, it seems evident that children are given by the gods; hence the idea of a sacrifice in case of sterility. But in addition to the religious rite, native doctors have many drugs to militate against this misfortune (1). The special porridge cooked for a sterile woman (mhika, shimhiko) is called *shiholeko* amongst the Ba-Ronga. The poor woman is despised.

586 Sterility can be a cause of divorce; the husband has the right of sending his wife home. But generally the parents of the woman find a *nhlampsa*, viz. a younger girl, and give her to the husband as a second wife.

6) Pregnancy and Miscarriage.

843 A special treatment is followed for the first pregnancy when the breasts begin to swell, a condition which is called *munyama* (darkness). The physician makes small incisions near the breast and on the legs, and draws out a little blood. The pregnant woman also drinks a decoction for the same purpose, i. e. to

(1) A Pedi man told me that in his tribe the first thing to do was to ascertain if sterility were due to the husband or to the wife. For this purpose a little bit of the clothing of the husband and of the wife was cut off and placed near a spider's nest. This spider is a kind of mygale of enormous size. If the spider took the piece of the husband's clothing down to its nest, it meant that he was in fault, and vice versa.

768
782 The first of the ceremonies of this day[1] is the sacrifice on the grave. The master of the mourning takes a pot of beer, and followed by the crowd, especially by the *batukulu*, goes to the place where the deceased has been buried. He stops there and prays : "See this jar of beer! We bring it to thee ; we have gathered to tear to pieces the mourning. We beseech thee that this ceremony may be performed in peace and good understanding." Then he pours a little of the drink into the cup which is on the grave, the same which the deceased used when alive. One *ntukulu* then takes the jar, which is still almost full, and drinks the contents with the other *batukulu*. This has been done calmly. But this act has made the *batukulu* bolder. They become troublesome. As soon as the crowd has come back from the grave, they steal another pot of beer. They insult the masters of the village. They say : "Why! You have never sent us any notice about the decisions concerning the mourning! We are tired! We will go and take our wives with us!" But some of the old men go to them and say : "Be good! Do not spoil the feast!"

By the end of the afternoon all the relatives assemble near the door of the mortuary hut, and bring the goats which they have given for the feast. Here the true sacrifice, the living offering, is made, very much in the same style as that described when treating of the crushing down of the hut (p. 158). The old man who prays, says : "See us here! We have come together to conclude our mourning. May there be no noise, no misunderstanding, no anger amongst the *batukulu*! This is our ox (the goat). It has been provided by so and so. Many others have been brought. See! You have died as a great chief!" At this very moment a *ntukulu* rises and begins to insult the old man who is praying : "You have no concern for us! Why do you leave us out ? You do not give us our wives! You are killing us!" And the other *batukulu* join in chorus. The end of the sacrifice and of the prayer is always the same in these big, religious, family gatherings of the Ba-Ronga : the *batukulu* steal the part of the victim set apart for the gods. The throng pursues them laughing, and pelts them with balls of *psanyi*.

[1] [i.e., the day of the adjudication of the inheritance --Analyst]

783 village itself, which must carry out the collective purification of
768 *hlamba ndjaka*.

I must further mention a new custom which is spreading
587 amongst the Ba-Ronga in the neighbourhood of Lourenço
609 Marques. When a widow objects to becoming the wife of the legal
611 inheritor, she goes home and adopts another husband. There are plenty of men of other tribes, coming from Inhambane, Quelimane, Mozambique, who have no wife. They accept the proposal of the widow and go to live in her village. They are generally despised and called by the insulting name of *mugomo*, a Zulu word meaning an empty iron oil-tin. They are as hard and unfeeling as such a tin! If children are born, they belong to the family of the deceased husband, who paid the lobolo.

587 Sometimes also a widow chooses a nephew who is still a child. She gives him food as if she were his wife, but she lives with another man whom she loves. It even happens that she may choose a girl, the daughter of another wife of the deceased. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

C. OLD AGE AND DEATH

888 An old woman, having in some sort gone out from the sexual
782 community, enjoys some privileges which are taboo for her sisters who are still capable of childbearing. She is allowed to put on the clothing of the widows ; contamination of death is not so dangerous for her. She can proceed to the purification of the village, in certain cases of epidemic, and of the weapons of the warriors in war time (Part III). After the sacrifice of the black ram for rain, old women and small girls alone are allowed to eat the flesh of the victim.

462 But old and decrepit women are despised. As long as they
888 can still till their land, they are treated with consideration, but when they have lost all their strength and must be fed by their children, they are looked upon as troublesome burdens. I must say that, as long as she still has an atom of vigour, a Thonga woman goes to her field and tills it. During all her life time

1 [See pp. 578-579 in these categories or in III.—Analyst]

764 inhabitants of the kraal. One of them, the saluter (mulosi), goes to meet them and offers them a shilling. They keep silence. He tells them the news of the village. They do not answer. He leaves them and comes a second time with a fresh present. Then they consent to tell the news of their home, but they do not enter the village. The same man returns to them a third time with £ 1 ; they refuse to accept it. He adds 10/. (£ 1.10 is considered the normal sum to be paid as a kind of fine by the widower to the parents of the deceased.) They refuse again : this is an insult! Happily the *ntukulu* is there ; he will act as mediator between the two families. The visitors summoned him on their arrival and he has been sitting with them the whole time ; is he not the son of their sister ? But before he went to them, his father has given him his instructions : "Tell them that I have not eaten your mother." The *ntukulu*, as we shall see, is very free with his maternal uncles. He has the right of teasing them, even insulting them. Seeing that they do not accept the money, he stands and gives vent to his grief, throws sand at them, tries to drive them away, weeps. "No! Father has not killed mother! He is not a wizard! She died a natural death!" They see his tears, and then consent to enter the village.

764 In front of the mortuary hut, all the belongings of the deceased wife have been piled up, together with the straw crown of the hut : her pots, plates, baskets, spoons, mortars, etc. The brothers break everything. Should there be any new implements amongst them, they will perhaps give them to their nieces. Then they lift up the roof of the hut and throw it into the bush. They pick all the plaster from the walls and throw it away where they threw the roof. The sacrifice is then accomplished amidst the ruins of the destroyed hut. Whilst it is being prepared, the women of both families insult each other. The female relatives of the deceased say to the women of the village : "You have killed her because she was a splinter in your eyes" (shilabi). The others answer : "Have you seen us kill her ? Perhaps people do not die with you ?" The *bukwele*, the special jealousy which almost always exists between co-wives, explains how it is possible for them to address such amenities to each other. But the victim is

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

764 prepared, all the limbs cut off, the portion of the gods set apart.
782 The elder brother of the deceased woman prays in these words :
768 "My sister, go in peace, be not angry ; because we love you, we
595 have come to mourn you to-day. Do not say we have not mourned you. Go to so and so (father, grandfather, etc.), call them here, give us good sleep and good health, etc." The batukulu appropriate the offering and the mourning ends in laughter, dancing and drinking. The neighbours come and take part in the rejoicings.

When they return home, the mourners spend all the mahloko money in buying wine. They sometimes become quite intoxicated. Afterwards both families begin to visit each other again.
764 This custom of the mahloko fine is so strong that converts
768 still adhere to it. But they usually send the money to the wife's family when informing them of the death, and no other ceremony is performed.

In the Northern clans the mahloko are also paid, but it seems that the family of the widower considers that it has the right to claim the repayment of the whole lobolo, when the deceased wife has left no child to compensate for the loss. In Nondwane, though we are still in Ronga territory, when the woman dies
765 shortly after marriage the lobolo must be repaid. Further north
782 the procedure is as follows : the deceased woman is buried by her husband according to the ordinary rules ; one year elapses and a special feast is celebrated, similar to the "beer of mourning" (page 164), in the village of the wife's parents, where both families gather together and provide the necessary victims. It commences with a sacrifice in which the father of the deceased wife squeezes the *psanyi* of the goat on to those present, all the time insulting the gods who have killed his child and made trouble between the two families. He ends with words addressed to the widower's relations : "I cleanse you from your misfortune." The widower's father does the same thing, insulting also his own gods, and every one rubs his body with the green liquid squeezed from the *psanyi*. Then prayer for new blessings is offered and the sacrifice is made, as
765 customary, and the actual discussion as to claims takes place. Each family takes possession of a hut, the widower's family assembling

588 A young man who has the courage to think of marrying a near relation is regarded as a wizard. *A lowa*, he bewitches! This term, which is applied only to actual witches, is not too strong to designate his action. He was not allowed to *gangisa* her, and now he wants to take her as his wife! But this word lowa, or loya, is used here in another sense: "Bushaka byi lowa hi tihomu" (the blood relationship is bewitched by the oxen). "Bumamana byi lowa" (the mother relationship is bewitched). (Viguet.) Those who consent to such an act must be prayed for publicly and anointed with psanyi (the grass found in the bowels of a sacrificed goat.)

588 782 So the young man goes to his uncle, the father of the girl, to announce his intention of marrying her; he must *be homu*, beat an ox, viz. bring an ox with him as a first step to appease his uncle. This ox is said to "open the hut." The ox may be only a goat, the goat which will be used for the sacrifice, — because a religious ceremony is necessary. All the relatives assemble on a certain day in the girl's village. The wedding pair are inside the hut, the goat is killed, the offering prepared, the psanyi put aside. Then the bridegroom and the bride are called outside and made to sit on the same mat; the man's leg is passed over the girl's leg; (this is done to "kill the shame" *ku dlaya tingana*); they are both anointed with the green liquid of the psanyi; the skin of the goat is then taken, a hole is cut in its middle and it is put on the heads of the two cousins. Through the opening the liver of the animal is handed down to them, quite raw. They must tear it with their teeth. It must not be cut with a knife; this is taboo. They have to bite it, to pull vigourously on both sides so as really to tear it, and then they must eat it. Shibindji, liver, means also patience, determination. "You have acted with strong determination! Now eat the liver! Eat it in the full light of day, not in the dark! It will be a mhamba, an offering to the gods (Gana)." The priest of the family will then say: "You, our gods, so and so, look! We have done it in the daylight. It has not been done by stealth. Bless them, give them children." Should this sacrifice not be made, misfortune would indeed come upon them and the woman would remain childless. When the prayer is ended, those present take all the solid psanyi, put

588 it on the wife's head and say to her : "Go and bear children."
782 *In the Ronga clans* the *dlaya shilongo* is somewhat different. The bridegroom must first give £ 1 to the father ; this is over and above the lobolo, of course. Both families provide a goat. These goats are killed without the assistance of the uterine nephews, in front of the hut of the girl's mother. The grandfather prays to the gods of the girl's father : "So be it! They have decided to marry each other ; you, gods of the boy and the girl, unite them together so that they do not hate each other ; let them not remind each other that they are brother and sister ; let their union not be spoilt by such remembrances, nor by other people saying to them: "You have been guilty of witchcraft! You have married your relative!" By this prayer a general notification is given to everybody, and the feeling of shame is removed. Afterwards the officiating relative continues, exhorting the new wife, telling her all that she must do for her husband, mentioning all the details of her conjugal duties with such realism that she begins to cry. The bridegroom bows his head in shame. The preacher goes on till somebody puts a piece of meat into his mouth to stop the exhortation!

The whole country has gathered to see the proceedings and to eat the meat. The wedding pair do not partake of it, because *the goats have been sacrificed for them* (ba hahlela bone). The relatives go home, roasting on the way the joint of meat they have received so as to eat it before reaching their village.

602 The aim of the *dlaya shilongo* is lawfully to kill one kind of relationship and to replace it by another, because the two are not compatible. However, in the case of inheritance of a rarana, for instance, when a blood relative has to change his relationship and to become a relative by marriage, he can inherit without any rite being performed, if there is no nearer legal heir ; in this case it is said : "Bushaka byi ta pfuka — the blood relationship will be revived." It will be strengthened by the new marriage relationship.

588 In the case of marriage with the great mukoñwana, this rite
607 is also performed, as previously mentioned (p. 244). The wedding pair are also covered with the goat's skin. This goat is

604 611 597 *(pfusha muti) by means of a ntukulu.* Should he see that he has no children, that his village is in danger of "dying," he will take his unmarried sister to his village and refuse to accept the lobolo for her. He will say to her : "Do not fear! If you die, I will bury you!" This duty falls in the first place to the husband ; but the brother is ready to fulfil it. She will have lovers, and perhaps give birth to a son. As she has not been lobola, this child belongs to the mother's family, according to the great rule of Native law. The uncle will appropriate this male offspring of his family, who will bear the *shibongo* of his kokwana. A uterine nephew, adopted under these circumstances, can save the family of his mother from extinction.

2) Rights of the uterine nephew.

604 782 The attitude of the ntukulu wa shisati (the uterine nephew) to his malume is quite peculiar. "Ntukulu i hosi, a nyenyela hikwapsu ku malume." — "The uterine nephew is a chief! He takes any liberty he likes with his maternal uncle" (Mboza). These prerogatives of uterine nephews with regard to relatives on their mother's side, their bamalume and bakokwana, appear clearly in the religious ceremonies. We have seen the prominent part which batukulu take in these rites. "Ba yima mahlwen ka psikwembu" — "they stand before the gods, in their stead" (Viguet). They must be the servants of the altar, and the consumers of the offering. In the great sacrifice for rain, as accomplished in the Northern clans, an offering of beer is made, together with the sacrifice of the black victim. (See Part VI.) It is the uterine niece of the chief who must fetch the mealies from the granary, pour them into the pot, take the first handful to crush it in the mortar, give the first blow with the pestle, and begin each of the complicated acts of the brewing. When the black victim is brought, some one puts an assagay into her hand and helps her to stab the animal. She it is who "gives over to the gods" (nyiketa psikwembu). The same thing happens in the great family gatherings : one ntukulu holds the leg, another the

604 782 assagay. The batukulu dispose of the portion of the limbs offered to the gods. They *cut* the prayer and, at that moment they steal the meat or the beer of the sacrifice and run away with them. Why is this? "Because a ntukulu does not fear the saliva of his malume" (Mboza). They live in such intimacy with them that they can eat that which was reserved for the gods (1) (See p. 162).

604 The ntukulu *also takes precedence* in some other rites ; in the circumcision school the uterine nephew of the chief is at the head of the circumcised. In the *luma milomo* (page 146) he starts the purifying ceremony, and "gives to the others" (nyiketa) the use of the food of the deceased.

604 428 178 But it is especially in the question of the inheritance that he shows himself in his characteristic aspect. Father-right has set in and is strongly supported by the lobola custom. Therefore the sons of the deceased have the sole right to the property of their father, wives as well as implements. The batukulu, however, the uterine nephews, refuse to be left out! You will find them everywhere, trying to get something for themselves. They were already planning with the malume's wives to take them as spouses after the death of their husband. Remember how they teased the whole family, on the day of the distribution of the widows (page 208). When the implements were distributed, they came and claimed their *tjhumba* (a technical expression, it would seem, which means precisely this kind of claim lodged by a malume or a ntukulu). They were given the small assagay, the big one remaining for the son. In this way *ba nyiketa pfindla, they give over the inheritance to the legal heirs.* This is a most vivid representation of a right which no longer exists, having in fact become

769 602 (1) Some ethnographers have supposed that ancestral worship only began when the father took command of the family and consequently did not exist in the period of mother-right. This seems to me absolutely false. The spirits of the mother's family are invoked as well as the father's ancestors, and the special place of the uterine nephews in worship down to this day is best explained in this way: before the gods of the father were known and prayed to, those of the mother were worshipped, and consequently the batukulu held a special position in the ritual. When the ancestors on the father's side made their appearance in the Bantu Pantheon, beside those on the mother's side, or after the institution of father right, the batukulu preserved that special position.

air circulate, is the goats' kraal (19). It may be placed somewhere else, behind the huts, for instance ; or sometimes goats are tethered every night by the leg to sticks round the hubo. The pigs are never kept on the hubo, but always behind the hut : they are newcomers in the Thonga village and have hardly yet won their "droit de cité." Let us salute, as we pass by, the tree (25) which is, as we shall see, the mystical stem of the village. We may perhaps see, hanging upon it, a piece of clothing offered to the gods, or at its base a broken pot which is the *gandjelo*, the altar of the village. The gandjelo is often placed, by preference, among the poles of the main entrance on the right. The village tree, which has a ritual significance, is not to be confounded with the trees of the hubo (26), which are but *mindjuti*, shade-trees, under which the inhabitants are fond of sitting.

So we reach the main hut which faces the gate. This is the dwelling of the headman. In hut 3 lives his second wife, in 4, his third and in 5 his fourth. 2 is called *shilubelo*. Great personages, men owning a large kraal, like to build such a hut, which is smaller than the ordinary ones and where no woman sleeps. It is the headman's own hut, where people *luba*, viz., pay their homage to him; a kind of office of the master of the village! He may sleep in it and summon his wives to come to him there. But he generally prefers to sleep in his wives' huts, one month in each, according to the polygamic custom.

Behind 4 and 10 is a *mhala*, a shed for the implements. It is built, like the goats' kraal, without plaster walls, and is smaller than a hut. There may be three or four of these in the village.

The headman and his wives occupy the back of the village. At the sides live his younger brothers, one, who has two wives, in 7 and 8, two others, those who have but one wife each, in 9 and in 10 respectively. In 11 lives a married son; in 12 it may be a nephew, son of the headman's sister, or a son-in-law; (see page 252). 13 might be the hut of a stranger (mulubeti), who has asked permission to stay with the headman of the village, as he wished to be under his protection. The case is not frequent, but may occur, and in order to be received into the mystic unity of the community, this man will have to "hlamba ndjaka" (See page 153), together with all the inhabitants of the kraal.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

621 595 782 10) Having closed the village in this way, she *performs a sacrifice.* She sips a mouthful of water from a tumbler, spitting out a portion of it (phahla) towards the people ; then she washes her hands, and throws a little of the water towards them in order *to give them* the village. This act is accompanied by the following words : "Be not tied by the village! Bring forth children ; live and be happy and get everything. You gods, see! I have no bitterness in my heart. It is pure. I was angry because my husband abandoned me, he said I was not his wife ; he loved his younger wives. Now, this is finished in my heart. We shall have friendly relations together..." The prayer being concluded, the headman goes to the main entrance, pushes the thorny branch aside, and opens the village.

621 574 11) The last act is the *khangula*, the *inauguration ceremony*. Beer is prepared, neighbours are invited and they all drink together, the neighbours coming *to see the new village* (ku bona muti).

As regards the old one, when the moving has been accomplished through the back door widened for the purpose, one of the inhabitants closes the main entrance with a branch. Hence comes the expression which is applied to a village all of whose inmates have died, and which has, on that account, disappeared : "Those people have all died and there was not even one left to close the gate."

II. *In the Ba-Ronga Clans.*

621 787 The sequence of rites for the removal of a village is very much the same as in the Northern clans.

824 765 1) The headman examines some spots and consults the bones : "Must I built at such and such a tree ?"

2) When the tree has been designated, he goes to it and places at its foot his furniture (nyundju) and his instrument of worship, his altar, (a pot, a jar, see Part VI). The altar may be placed at the main entrance later on, if the bones so order it. As already mentioned, there will be a mystic relation between him and that tree. He must never cut it down. If any of the branches should be

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

621 789 824 gathered in a heap. The headman, on the advice of the medicine man, cuts from certain very vigorous trees such as the nkanye and the ntjondjo, two branches which can live when transplanted. He digs holes on both sides of the entrance and puts the branches into them. Across the gateway, he buries a third branch of the ntjopfa tree, "which causes oblivion" (p. 58): this will be smeared with special drugs in order to increase its efficacy ; it is intended to prevent the baloyi, witches and people speaking bad words. (lit "with bad lips"), from thinking about the village and spoiling it.

621 823 789 7) On the evening of that day, the headman and his principal wife have intercourse in their hut and, at dawn, while it is still dark, they go and wash their hands at the main entrance. Mboza does not say that all the other couples must do the same, or trample on the spot. In Nondwane this is sufficient and the rite does not apply to the other couples. But at Manyisa, midway between Lourenço Marques and Khosen, where the Djonga customs are sometimes met with, all the couples must have relations, one after the other, according to order of precedence. It is deemed so important to keep the due order in this "giving to each other the right of resuming sexual life" that, should an elder brother have been absent when the village moved, on his return he must undergo a special treatment in a neighbouring village, during a few days, to avoid any bad consequences resulting from having been unlawfully "preceded" (rangeliwa).

621 789 782 756 8) After the night during which this sexual rite has taken place, at daybreak, all the dried grass is piled in front of the main hut and burnt ritually. The headman throws into the fire a special medicinal pill in order to *give the village over* to his people (nyiketa muti). They all warm their bodies at the blaze, and go and set fire to all the other heaps of dried grass which they made when clearing the soil.

9) The medicine man comes on that same day, and sprinkles the fence with his drugs, in order to protect the village against bush fires, wizards and disease. He walks all round the fence saying : "Happy village! May misfortune not enter here! These are my drugs!" — He starts from one of the poles of the main

entrance and finishes his walk at the other, hanging upon it the branch with which he has been sprinkling.

10) Then he sacrifices a hen. A young man accompanying him cuts its throat ; the doctor plucks some feathers from the neck, sacrifices in the ordinary way and invokes his gods : "You used to treat villages (daha miti) with these drugs and I do the same. I do not act of my own wisdom ; you have given it to me. Bless this place, etc." Then he plucks a feather from the hen's right wing, and suspends it at the main entrance or in the main hut, inside, over the door, according to the directions given by the bones. This is the *shirungulo* (see Part VI) and the act is called : "to tie the village" (tjimba muti).

Amongst the Rongas, there are some other *buhlapfa taboos*. It is not allowable to light any fire in a village until it is completely built. During the whole building period, cooking is done outside the fence ; crushing mealies in the mortars and dancing are also prohibited. Whistling (ku ba noti) is forbidden, as it might call the wizards inside the village before it has been protected by the charms.

If a man has many wives, he may build a second village for himself and establish one of them there. A grown-up son, the son of the woman, will represent the headman in that village, but the law of "tying the village" will also be observed in this case. The headman will perform the act with this woman, and preside at the burning of the dried grass and of the medicinal pill, by which he *gives* the village to the inhabitants.

When a younger brother, or a son, leaves the headman and founds a village for himself (tihambela muti), he does it according to the same laws as those observed at the regular moving of a village.

III. *Some remarks on the rules of moving.*

Let us now analyse the two parallel sequences of rites which we have just described, and which complete each other. It is easy to discover amongst them three series of rites, social, protective and passage rites.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

825 777 484 782 that the road is not "clean" (Viguet). The flesh of this bird is used in the preparation of the charms carried by travellers. There are also two mammals which give the same warning : the duyker antelope (mhunti) and the polecat (mangobo). Should a boy going to Johannesburg meet with any of these three animals, he will go to his kokwana (grandfather) and ask him for help ; the old man will then take a mouthful of beer or water and project it towards the traveller (to make "phaa") with the following prayer addressed to the ancestor-gods : "You, so and so, look to this child who wants to travel! Bless him in his journey! May the Spirit of the bush (Shikwembo sha nhoba) remain asleep."

517 461 The *discussion of affairs* (ku khanela timhaka) on the square of the village also fills many an hour in a man's life.

On the whole, men have but little to do. We can fairly estimate at three months the time required for the work which they have to do for the village and for the community. The remaining months are devoted to pastimes and pleasure (1).

III. *Games of adults.*

000 Having already described boys' and girls' games (p. 66 and 172), I now proceed to those of the adults, as forming an important part of the Life of the Village.

462 (1) Much has been said and written about the division of village work between men and women in the Bantu kraal. I shall try to show in the Practical Conclusions, No. V that civilisation is bound to produce great changes in this region. But, as already pointed out, it is certain that to the Natives themselves their system appears perfectly natural and that the women do not at all complain of their fate. The following charming story which is told by a Moravian missionary, The Rev. Th. Bachmann, who lived for a long time amongst the Wa-Nika, between Lake Tanganyika and Nyassa gives fresh proof of this assertion :

000 One day, as the rain was pouring down, I saw Walusangano returning from his garden with his wife, Leya. The wife was walking in front with a big bundle of wood on her head. On the wood was a basket containing maize, cucumbers and beans, as well as the hoe. On her back Leya was carrying her youngest child. The other children followed and the father brought up the rear-guard, carrying only an open umbrella. We were greatly shocked at this sight, and I thought it my duty to intervene on behalf of the women. On Sunday night, at public worship, I spoke of what I had seen in the most expressive terms possible. But my speech did not make the impression I expected. The men looked very much embarrassed ; the women indignant.

The following week, at sunset, I was under my veranda, watching the lightning and

643 857 However, specially appointed persons watch over him and report of his well being to his father. His youthful playmates are taught to respect him ; he is surrounded in his games by a miniature court, from which he chooses his favourites (tinxekwa) ; some of his companions act as counsellors and reprimand those who do not treat him with due respect. They play at court... also at soldiers ; the juvenile troop wage war with the wasps, and also with the boys of the adjoining villages.

643 781 777 751 782 When the child reaches boyhood, the bones are consulted, and sacrifices offered in order to ascertain from the gods whether it be well to take him to the capital. Should the answer be in the negative, there is nothing to do but wait. When the dice declare the propitious moment to have arrived, the transfer is effected and the boy taken to his father. This is a great occasion for the counsellors who have watched over the boy and who thenceforward supervise his education. They feast themselves well (ba fumisana), kill goats, perhaps even an ox, and offer a sacrifice to proclaim to the gods the return to the capital of the heir to the throne ; to his ankle is tied the astragalus of a slaughtered goat, as a protective amulet.

643 881 836 At puberty the boy undergoes, in the same manner as his companions, all the ceremonial rites usual at that period. The principal doctors of the country treat him, in order that henceforth he may be a man (ba mu yimisa a ba wanuna), having full right to enter into the sexual relations of gangisa (p. 97). Care is taken, however, to attach to his person comrades of riper age, who will prevent him giving way to excesses, (suka banhwanyana la bakulu ba ta mu gema, ba mu sibela ku kula), which would arrest his growth and render him small and feeble. He thus lives in relative continence, participating in the play and in the work of boys of his own age, and looking after the herds. At times he gives a feast, when his father happens to have presented him with an ox with which to make merry.

643 588 595 Now we see him arrived at manhood, at the age when the Blacks take a wife. If his father is still living, the young man is not allowed to marry officially. He may certainly lobola, viz., contract regular marriage in the usual way, and possibly

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

When they have chosen it—it must be the stem of a nkonono tree—they cut it and bring it back to the capital. In front walks the master of the ceremonies, Godlela, and behind him four men carrying the shiphandje. Those who accompany them have the right of entering the villages and stealing fowls. Woe to those who meet with this troop! They will be relieved of all they carry, "because the forked branch of the great medicine of the chief is taboo."

The sacred branch having duly reached the capital, Godlela proceeds to the second operation, the *burning of the drugs*. Mboza saw the magician take pieces of skin cut from buffaloes, lions, hyenas, elans, panthers, snakes of various kinds and, last but not least, from the bodies of men, enemies killed in the wars: part of the skin of the forehead, the heart, the diaphragm, the nails, a finger, some ears... All these are roasted in a large pot. On some mats are spread various magical roots cut into small pieces; these are also thrown into the pot. The chief and all the sub-chiefs approach and, with hollow reeds, inhale and swallow the vapour and the smoke which emanates from it (1).

The preparation of the great medicine having been sucessfully accomplished, the great drum (nhumburi) of the capital is brought on to the square, and everybody dances, even women, who take assagais in their hands and sing: "We are thankful if we die (hi tlangela ku fa)" viz., "The country is in security, our invincible medicine is ready! We shall not be killed by enemies but will die a natural death." Before extinguishing the fire which was used to roast the medicines, Godlela takes a little water, pours it on the glowing embers and, when it vaporises with the customary sound, he emits the sacramental *tsu* and prays to his gods, the departed spirits of the Tlhaltha family, as doctors always do, in order to obtain their blessing on the nyokwekulu.

(1) The Hlewane sub-clan, which revolted many times against the legal chief and succeeded by its intrigues in provoking the war of 1894, after which it became the reigning family of Nondwane, used to abstain from participating in this "swallowing of the smoke," because, in former years, it had been defeated by Maphunga's people and some of its men killed; their flesh had been used in the concoction of the nyokwekulu. So they feared to go and inhale the odour of their fellow clansmen.

262 643 527 which is not eaten, and rub their faces with it. But *no religious ceremony is performed.* It is the same for the *fuma*, a paste made with the contents of the kwakwa fruit, a kind of Strychnos very similar to the nsala, but of a different taste. The ceremony was even more simple than with the almonds ; the chief used to send a little of this paste to each village saying : "Let this be the first bite you swallow : the new year has come!" (Luman, ku tlhese nguba.) No powder was used in connexion with it. The magical drug was used, on the other hand, when the luma of pumpkin leaves took place.

II. *The luma of the Kafir corn.*

262 643 782 769 796 The great, the official luma, amongst the Ronga clans, is that performed for the Kafir corn (mabele). The great wife of the chief grinds the first grains of Kafir corn reaped in the fields. She cooks the flour in a pot and pours into it some of the royal powder kept in the calabash, so as to make a *shimhimbi* (See page 42). The chief takes a little of the food and offers it to the spirits of his ancestors, at the main entrance of the royal kraal. He prays to them in the following terms : "Here has the new year come! Precede us, you gods, and luma, so that, for us also, Kafir corn shall help our body, that we may become fat, not thin, that the witches may increase the corn, make it to be plentiful, so that, even if there is only a small field, big baskets may be filled! (Nguba hi yoléyi! Rangan ñwine, mi luma, ñwi Psikwembu! Na hine, mabele ma tjhama amirin yeru psinene, hi kuluka hi nga wondji. Abaloyi ba yandjisa, psi tala ngopfu, nambi shi shisi-ñwanyana shi shiñwe, a ku tale tingula!)"

262 643 796 534 609 After this religious ceremony everyone luma in turn, the chief first, then the sub-chiefs, then the counsellors, then the warriors who have killed enemies in battle, then the headmen of the kraals who have all been summoned to the capital. Should one of the headmen be prevented from coming by illness, his younger brother will not precede him. He will bring him the *shimhimbi* in a leaf ; the elder will take it, and, after him, the other brothers. Women do not eat the magic powder. Neither do strangers,

262 643 609 796 even those who are settled in the clan. They have their own medicine and luma for themselves, though they must not do it before the chief of the country.

III. *The luma of bukanye and the great national feast.*

137 273 796 824 The most characteristic of all these ceremonies connected with the first fruits is the luma of bukanyi. Tobane has given me a circumstantial description of this feast and it deserves to be reproduced in all its details, as being a typical manifestation of Bantu national life.

The *nkanye* (1) is a large tree, one of the finest in the country. Its botanical name is Sclerocarya caffra (Sond); it is generally known amongst the English of Natal as the Kafir plum.

It bears fruit of the size of a greengage, which when ripe is a beautiful golden yellow and has a strong flavour of turpentine and a penetrating odour. It is a dioecian tree, the male bearing bunches of flowers while the female has single flowers. The Natives are quite aware of this; they cut down the male plants but take care to keep a few in each district to fecundate the female. The fruit — the kanye — begins to ripen in the month of January and falls to the ground. The odour is perceptible everywhere, and it is then that the principal men of the country approach the chief and say to him: "The time has come to luma."

In the luma of the bukanye it is easy to discover four consecutive ceremonies:

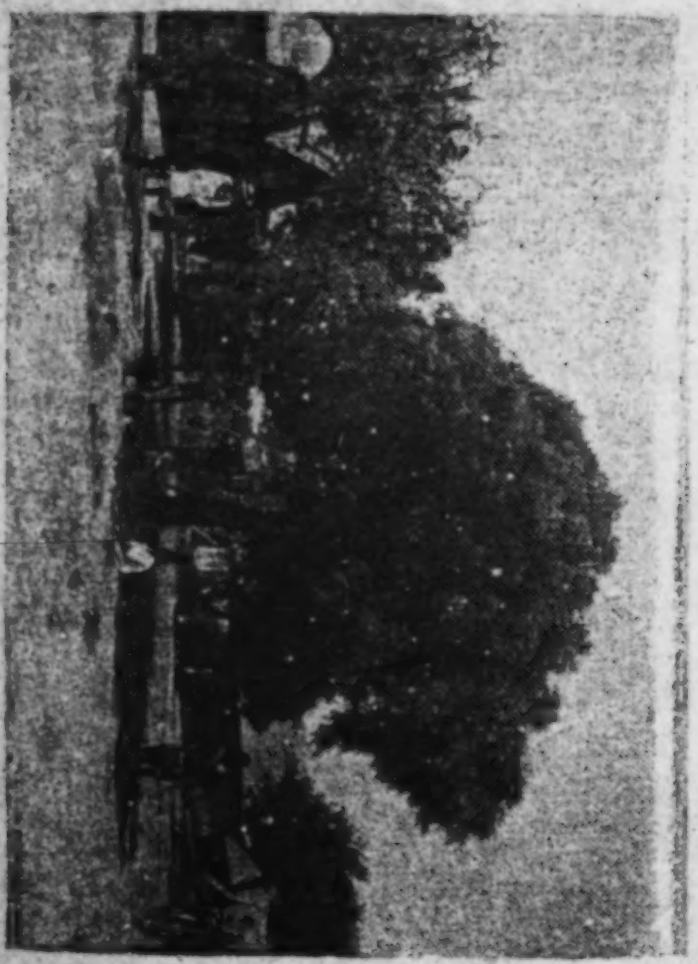
a) The luma of the gods and of the chief.

262 782 273 796 The first ripe makanye are gathered and pressed at the capital, and the sour liquor thus obtained is poured out on the tomb of the deceased chiefs in the sacred wood; they are invoked to bless this new year and the feast which is about to be celebrated.

(1) Nkanye, plural minkanye, is the tree in question. Kanye, plural makanye, is the fruit of this tree; bukanye is the drink made from this fruit. In the same way the wild apricot tree is called mphimbi, plural mimphimbi. The fruit himbi, plural mahimbi; the drink made from the fruit, buhimbi.

262
782
796
273

Nkolele, the sub-chief of Libombo, used on this occasion to pronounce the following prayer : "This is the new year. Let us



The Ntsuya of Ribye (16 miles North of Lourenço Marques)
Phot. H. Junod

not kill each other! Let us eat peacefully! (Hi yo ngube! Hi nga dlayane! A hi mwenen ha hombe!)" Here is another

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

262 formula : "May this bukanyi do no harm! May we not slay each
782 other under its influence. May it cause no serious quarrels."
796 They are afraid that, during the general intoxication which will
273 shortly prevail, quarrels will arise, some of which may terminate fatally. During the whole month of bukanye drinking, all business is at a standstill, just as with us all bankruptcy proceedings and all prosecutions for debt are held in abeyance for two weeks during the New Year holidays!

The gods having luma first, the bones are consulted. Should the throw be propitious, the chief will luma next ; thus the opening ceremony of the feast is concluded.

b) The luma of the army.

796 The young people are now assembled to clean up the public
273 square and all the roads ; the ball room must be prepared! The women of the capital start out early in the morning, beating the *pibubutwana*, that is to say sounding the call that is produced by striking the lips (bu-bu-bu-bu), and they go all over the country gathering the golden fruit ; this is piled up in an enormous heap on the public square and the brew is proceeded with in the following manner. The makanye are pierced (tshunya) with a pointed wooden splinter ; the stone falls covered with a transparent white pulp into the jar ; into this jar is also squeezed out with the fingers all the juice which remains in the pulp adhering to the skin ; this is continued until the jar is half full, when the stones are taken out, and on the following day the pressing is resumed until the jar is full. On the third day the beer has sufficiently fermented to be pungent and agreeable to the taste and is ready for consumption. Empty barrels are easily procurable in the environs of Lourenço Marques. The women of the capital brew ten or fifteen huge casks of the precious liquor! This accomplished, the second ceremony begins.

796 A convocation of the entire male portion of the tribe is held in
273 the capital, but the first to respond to the call must be the men,
789 the warriors of the army, who come in full array, with all their
701 ornaments, and carrying their small play shields. One cask of

eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the new year."

Conclusion on the luma rite.

All these luma rites[1] of first fruits seem to have primarily a *religious origin*. The Bantus do not feel that they dare enjoy the products of the soil unless they have first given a portion of them to their gods. Is it not these gods who make the cereals grow? Have they not the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields? These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A subject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother the elder in the use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also to have been actuated by the idea of *passage*. There is a passage from one year to another. For the Thongas, I think the new year begins twice every year: it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August, when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at harvest, and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or ñwaka (Dj.). Though the luma rites do not bear all the characteristics of a true passage rite, like those of circumcision or moving, we may observe in the luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the magical powder used on this occasion being a protective measure to shield them from the calamities of this unknown year... And after all, is it not that feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the heart of man when entering on a new state and starting something fresh, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit with so many ritual precautions?

IV. *Taxation.*

The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower) obeys; he follows the chief who marches before him just as the

1 [see pp. 394-404 in these categories or in 116-Analyst]

684 782 584 836 VI.) If found guilty, he will have to pay an extra fine of two oxen (1).

When the abducted woman is an unmarried girl, the matter is not serious. No trouble is entailed, provided she does not become pregnant. In the latter case, the seducer can say: "Ndji dlele ku dya: I have killed to eat," viz. "I am ready to lobola the girl" (p. 97). If the girl does not consent, the man is free. But if the man does not wish to marry the girl by paying a full lobolo, whilst the girl and her relatives want him to do so, he will have to pay as much as £ 30 and an ox. "He has spoilt his cause!" His own relatives will be arrested and forced to pay. They are responsible for him and will scold him severely. (Mankhelu).

683 643 *Fighting ending in blows.* The wounded man runs to the square of the capital and shows himself. The assailants will have to pay a fine of £ 8, three for the chief and five for the victim, or of two oxen, one for the chief and one for the plaintiff. (Mankhelu).

682 672 *Murder.* A distinction is made between involuntary murder, which is an accident (mhango, Dj.), and a deliberate assassination.

In the case of *involuntary murder*, Mankhelu describes the proceedings as follows: —Should you have killed a man by accident in a hunting trip, for instance, you will try to arrange matters directly with his relatives, if you were good friends; your relatives will give them a girl. You dare not offer your own daughter, because they may refuse her, on account of their bad feelings! The same objection will not be made if your people provide the girl. They will accompany her with ten hoes and an ox, saying: "This is fat to smear our daughter." The notion which is at the base of this custom is not that a human person is the natural compensation for another human person, but that you give the diminished family a means of making good its loss. In fact as soon as the girl has born a child to the relatives of the deceased, she is free. If these men wish to keep her as their wife, they must

(1) The neighbouring Chopi tribe, on the contrary, leaves the husband to arrange matters as he likes. Formerly he used to kill the adulterer. But cases of adultery are never brought before the chief.

727 "hot" and from special plates (mireko) and broken pots. They are
783 forbidden to drink water. Their food must be cold. The chief
834 kills oxen for them (yi ba lumisa hi tihomu); but if the meat
761 were hot it would make them swell internally "because they are hot themselves, they are defiled (ba na nsila)." If they ate hot food, the defilement would enter into them. "They are black (ntima). This black must be removed" (Mankhelu). During all this time sexual relations are absolutely forbidden to them.

727 They must not go home to their wives. In former times the
304 Ba-Ronga used to tatoo them[1] with special marks from one eyebrow to the other. Dreadful medicines were introduced into the incisions and there remained pimples "which gave them the appearance of a buffulo when it frowns" (1).

789 After some days a medicine-man comes to purify them (ku ba
727 phutula), "to remove their black." There seem to be various
783 means of doing it, according to Mankhelu. Seeds of all kinds are put into a broken pot and roasted, together with drugs and *psanyi* of a goat. The slayers inhale the smoke which emanates from the pot. They put their hands into the mixture and rub their limbs with it (ba tilula) especially the joints.

789 Viguet describes this last act thus :—Pieces of medicinal roots
727 are put into the broken pot and roasted. They inhale the smoke.
782 Then cow's milk is poured into the pot on the embers and, when it boils, they have to put their fingers into it, one hand after the other, and pass them across their lips emitting the sacramental : "tsu" (which proves that it is a sacrifice to the gods, a religious act). Afterwards they say : "Phee! phee!" — viz.,
789 phephela phansi, (Dj. tikela hansi), "Go down, sink." This
727 means : "May you go deep into the earth, you, my enemy and
783 not come back to torment me." The last part of the treatment consists in rubbing the biceps, the legs, and the whole body with this milk. The medicinal embers are carefully collected, and reduced to a powder ; this will be put into small bags of skin called *tintebe* which the slayer will wear round his neck. They contain

578 (1) Hence an expression which is still in common use. When a Ronga wants to defy some one he says to him : "You are a coward! If you say you can tackle me come and kiss my forehead."

[i.e., the slayers returned from battle — Analyst]

765
535 way that all the men can see her pudenda which is
831 much tabooed (that is, sinful)."]
834 "Annotatio undecima (P. 161). Hic, mulier paulo dilutiore
765 colore magnaque statura addit: 'Hi kundjana, id est:
782 coeamus!' "

[Note 11 (page 161). Here a woman with a slightly lighter color and of large stature, adds: Hi kundjana, that is, "let us have intercourse!"]

841 "Annotatio duodecima (P. 187). Hæc sunt ipsissima verba, quibus Makhelu mulieris menstruansis taboo (id est nefas) describit. Mulier menstruans est res, quæ imprimis 'yila' est. Per sex dies 'yila,' id est, nefas est. Septimo die transit flumen ad se lavandam. Octavo ei nondum licet cum marito suo coire; forte enim sanguis pudendis ad hæret, eà insciente. Magis 'refrigescit.' (Verbo phula menstruans mulier comparatur cum aula a foco remota).

Si, ante id tempus, maritus cum uxore cœat, ægrotus fiat, veretrum retro ita recedat ut vir urinam reddere non possit et, brevi tempore, moriatur. Talem vitæ exitum multi habuerunt. Radicibus arboris cui nomen est mayilana vel mulieris menstruantis vestis particulâ, a medico ad levem pulverem redactâ, quæ ægro bibenda est, morbus sanari potest. Aegrotus multum sanguinis reddet, et veretro exeunte, salvus est."

[Note 12 (page 187). These are the very words with which Makhelu [sic] describes the taboo (that is, the sin) of the menstruating woman. A menstruating woman is something which is, first of all, yila. For six days she is yila, that is to say, taboo. On the seventh day, the flow that cleanses her passes over. On the eighth day she is not yet allowed to have intercourse with her husband; for perhaps some blood is still sticking to her pudenda without her knowledge. She "cools down" even more so. (By the word phula the menstruating woman is compared to the pot removed from the stove.)

841 If the husband should have sexual intercourse with his wife
834 before this time, he will be taken sick, his private parts will
756 decay to such an extent that the man would no longer be able to pass urine and would die within a brief period of time. Many have had such an end to their life. The sick man can be cured by a liquid containing the roots of the tree that is called mayilana or by a particle of the menstruating woman's dress, reduced to a light powder by the medicine man. The sick man loses a lot of blood; after his penis is able to pass water again, the man is well again.

follows : the nuts are thoroughly dried (womisa), and slightly pounded in a mortar so as to remove the thin peel which covers them ; they are then winnowed, and ground into a kind of flour ; this flour is put into a pot with a little water and cooked ; the fat is then collected in a big shell of Achatina and kept for external use. The residue is called *bubindje*. 252 303

I do not mention all the other fruits, more or less succulent, which serve the Natives for food. One must be terribly famished to enjoy them. I may just specify the *pfilu* (dji-ma), Vangueria infausta, a kind of insipid medlar ; the *tjhopfa* (dji-ma), fruit of the *ntjhopfa* tree, which I could never muster courage enough to taste, and the *bungu* (dji-ma) sometimes dignified with the title of the Kafir orange. This latter is the fruit of one of the varieties of the india-rubber tree, which grows along the shores of Delagoa Bay. (Landolphia Kirkii.) In the Morakwen forest grow the ntjhole shrubs from which the *tintjole* berries are picked during the summer. 137 222

The *muhlu* or water tree bears a berry called *tihlu*, which has an agreeable taste. The *mphimbi* bears the *mahimbi*, a large round fruit similar in form to an apricot with a double stone. Both these fruits are used to prepare a drink, and we shall mention them when treating of Thonga drinks.

* * *

There are a few taboos to mention in connection with trees. 782

It is considered dangerous to cut the trunk of any large tree. Should you wish to make a mortar of a nkanye, first smear some of the bark with certain drugs and also burn them at the foot of the tree before cutting it down. Should you want to cut down a nkwenga or a mahogany-tree, nhlapfuta (Ro.), shene (Dj.), to make a canoe, the master of the forest must first offer a sacrifice to the spirits of his ancestors who have been buried there. If you omit this precaution, you will be unable to find again the tree you have chosen. 824

231 Native goats are very small and frequently attacked by a disease called ndlwabane which decimates whole herds. They are not tended with sufficient care, although a special hut (mhala) is sometimes built to protect them from the rain.

Goats are killed by piercing the heart : this is at any rate the ritual way of killing them (I. p. 158). The officiating person stands on the right of the animal and stabs it in the left side, holding the left leg. The animal suffers acutely ; goats are however often slaughtered by cutting the throat, not from any feelings of compassion, but in order to prevent them crying too long, as "this would surely bring many people on the spot and you would have to share the meat with them!" (Mboza.)

231 782 If the ox plays an important part in *social life*, the goat seems to be specially reserved for sacrifices, that is to say for *religious usages*. This ritual use entitles us to suppose that, as millet seems to be the oldest cereal, the goat is the most ancient domestic animal amongst the Thongas, and, no doubt, amongst all South African Bantus.

The gall bladder, the astragalus, the half digested grass found in its intestines, strips made of its skin, all play a special part in the ceremonies and superstitious practices of the tribe previously mentioned. The gall bladder (nyongwa) is fixed in the hair of the person in whose honour the goat was slaughtered. The astragalus (nhlolo) is fastened to the wrist, the ankle or the waist as a means of protection. The *psanyi* (half digested grass) is taken from the shihlakahla stomach, and is used in connection with the invocation of the gods in the sacrifices. (See Part VI, Compare also I. p. 111, 160-162.)

136 231 643 782 *Sheep*, hamba, yin-tin, (Ro.) nyimpfu, yin-tin, (Dj.) are scarce in our tribe, and are mostly without wool. The wool sheep is called *shitlapu*. It is not taboo for subjects to possess sheep, but this animal is connected in a special manner with the chiefs. Its astragalus designates royal personages in the set of divinatory bones. It is used in the national sacrifices, those offered to the chief's ancestors at the capital. (See Part VI.) Let us remind the reader that its skin is used to carry a child in case of *bovumba* (I. p. 194).

The *pig*, as previously mentioned, is a new comer in the Bantu village. Its name, *nguluve*, means the wild pig. Most villages, however, possess one or two. They are never slaughtered in connection with sacrifices. 231

Poultry (tihuku) is the most common of all live stock. Not a village is without its fowl house (shihahlu) ; these are generally fashioned like a small hut and perched on piles to protect the poultry during the night from snakes. (See illustration I. p. 312.) 235 343

When a hen and her brood of young chickens have to be cared for, a much smaller hut is built on the ground, but the utmost precaution is taken to keep it almost hermetically sealed, as the mhamba (a long green snake, very venomous) and the shipyahla (Echnida arietans, a large viper resembling the puff-adder) do great execution amongst fowls! As cows are not bred for milking purposes, neither are chickens raised for the sake of their eggs. In fact Thongas consider it a sheer waste to eat eggs and always allow the hens to hatch them out. Hens are wilder than they are with us and often make their nests in the open country, returning some fine day with a flourishing young family. The breed is of very small size and the eggs are tiny : it would require at least two to equal the weight of one ordinary egg such as are for sale in the European markets ; it is therefore evidently more advantageous to hatch eggs than to eat them! If, by any chance, a hen dies on the nest from the bite of a snake, the Natives will willingly devour the half hatched or three quarters addled eggs ; the more developed the chicken, the greater their appreciation of the delicacy, for, says the Thonga, "i nyama!" — "this is meat!" Fowls are extensively used as timhamba, viz., sacrificial offerings. The throat is cut ; a little of the down plucked off the neck is dipped into the blood, and brought close to the mouth for the performance of the *tsu* rite, one of the smaller feathers of the wing (shihluwa), one of the claws, and the beak are tied together and fastened to the wrist, ankle or neck of the person for the sake of whom the offering has been made. (Part VI.) [136] 235 262 235 782

Thongas assert that they have always possessed fowls. "They 235

itself. Afterwards he had to drink the broth and eat the meat. The aim of the treatment was to enable him to kill more elephants. In the case of the elephant as well as of the hippopotamus the chief of the country has to perform the lurulula as well as the hunter "because he is the chief of all the animals of the country and he would be unable to govern it successfully if he did not do this." 224 777 643

The *rhinoceros (shibetshana)* is not common in Thongaland ; a few of these animals are found in the extreme south of the Maputju country. The same rules were observed when the hunters had succeeded in killing one ; but this is no easy task because, as Muvumbi said, the rhinoceros is terribly wild, as it has no "mapfalo." The mapfalo is a piece of cartilage which is found in all animals between the ribs, beneath the sternum ; it is the diaphragm ; it is also the seat of fear or of the conscience. It is this particular cartilage which throbs in the case of great fear. The rhinoceros has no mapfalo ; therefore it fears nothing and rushes savagely upon the hunter. Its meat is so delicious that when a man has tasted it he no longer wishes to drink water! 224 825

I never heard mention of the lurulula in connection with the *lion (nghala* (Djo.), *ndjau* (Ro.). To avoid being mauled by lions the hunters put into their mouths a little of every kind of food mixed with their powerful drugs and spit it out to the four winds in order to appease the ancestor-gods of the country. Then if they meet with a lion, the wild beast, instead of rushing upon them, will look at them quietly, its saliva dropping from its mouth, and will do them no harm. 224 782 825

Strange to say the *buffalo* (nyari) has no nuru, and when I asked why this was, my Maputju informant told me : "The buffalo is an ox." This answer may perhaps help us to understand something more about the nuru idea. 825

The statement regarding the *zebra* (mhangwa) is more curious still. "Mhangwa a yi lubiwi! Yi ni mabala ; i nala ; a yi ngeni hosin" viz. "No tax is paid for the zebra ; it is an animal with many colours (stripes) ; it is an enemy ; it must not enter the village of the chief." We have met with the same prohibition in connection with the village of the parents-in-law (I. p. 250).

As regards the *crocodile (ngwenya)* also called *shiwutlani-*

low, the fish is imprisoned between the reeds and the bank. 226
The construction of this trap is governed by strict laws : no 834
sexual relation is allowed during the five or six weeks of the fishing. The owner of the shibaba must cut the first reed. Women must not approach the spot. On the day of inauguration there is also a luma ceremony similar to that for the nhangu.

But the most curious fishing custom is the *tjeba*. "Ku tjeba" 226
means to kill fish in company in lakes which are drying up. At the end of the winter most of the small lakes scattered all over Thongaland, get smaller on account of the drought, and the fish they contain, consisting mostly of carp and barbel, are obliged to congregate in much smaller spaces. Natives take advantage of this and the whole country-side is summoned to go and tjeba, on a certain day, as it is important to be as numerous as possible in order to ensure success. The chief orders all his men to make *shiranga*, a kind of conical basket, a foot and a half high, whose upper end is open and wide enough to admit the hand. The shiranga must be very strong ; the tree used for the purpose is called ntjangari. When the shiranga are ready, a messenger is 202
sent to all the villages, crying : 226
626

Kho ! Khoooo ! Hobe ! Hobeee ! U yala nsateeee ! Na nsati a randja nyamooo ! A randja mihlubeee ! Kho ! Hobe !
You hate your wife ! Your wife also is fond of flesh food ! She is fond of the flesh of the tail of fishes !

Every male member of the tribe must answer to this summons by going to the shore. Should he refuse the call, he is blamed and despised, and his companions will sing to him a mocking song :

U yala ku tjeba, nyatihwaku !
You refuse to fish, nyatihwaku (1).

In the evening his wife will scold him, on seeing that he brings no fish home! She will punish him by giving him mealie pap without any sauce!

Before the throng enters the lake, someone must *make an* 226
offering ; he must be a descendant of the inhabitants of the country. 782

(1) Nyatihwaku is a formula of insult (I. p. 445).

226 not necessarily a member of the reigning family. He does not
782 perform the full sacramental *tsu* ; he merely spits without having put anything into his mouth, and says : "Let fish abound! Let them not hide in the mud! Let there be enough of them to
226 satisfy every one." Then all the men, quite naked, throw themselves into the lake, which is only one or two feet deep ; they put their shiranga into the water and hold it firmly down on the bottom ; a fish has perhaps been caught ; it is heard flapping

The tjoba fishing. *Phot. A. Burel.*

about inside the basket. The lucky fisherman seizes it through the opening. He carries a wooden pin to which a string is attached ; this string is called by the technical name of *ntjungwa*. He passes the pin through the gills of the fish and ties it on his string. Then he goes on fishing. All his companions do the same. The frightened fish scatter in all directions : but on all sides the shiranga fall over them, and the men have soon made a good haul. When they have reached the extremity of the lake, they come back shouting the following words : "Phindu-na-ye!" —"Come back, following them!" They are allowed when tired to come out of the water and rest in the rays of the sun. The more pertinacious, however, remain in as long as they like. When

226 the fishing is finished, when they all sit down and compare their catches.
651 Perhaps an enormous barbel has been caught, "the king of the lake," as these fish sometimes attain a very large size. "Woo! a dle ñhwakwe!" — "Oh! he has killed his mother," say the men, making fun of the fortunate fisherman! But the chief sends an induna who levies the tax. Each fisherman unties one fish from his string and gives it to him.

226 The tjeba fishing is practised all over Thongaland, in Ronga
782 territory, where such ponds are numerous in the sandy hollows, amongst the Hlabis, and in the neighbourhood of rivers where there are lagoons which dry up, as far as the Maluleke country. Should there be crocodiles in the pond, which may very well happen when the lake is connected with the Limpopo or the Nkomati, the religious ceremony is more important on account of the danger incurred. Then the bones are thrown and declare who must make the offering in order to secure adequate protection from the ancestor-gods. The officiator enters the lake first, and, plunging his shiranga into the water, says : "If you are here, crocodile, go away! you hyena, do not bite." Amongst the Maluleke, a man of the Ba-Nyai tribe must perform the religious ceremony, as the Ba-Nyai were in the country before the Thongas. He must go first and catch a fish, bring it out alive, and then, surrounded by his fellow Ba-Nyai, offer it to his ancestor-gods. Then he throws it back into the water. The Thonga chief, having ordered his men to keep silence, then makes the following proclamation in a loud voice : "Let the fish abound, and kill them all, but do not bewitch each other!"

226 The Hlengwes have a very curious custom which I have already
825 explained when discussing the Bantu notion of sexual relations
834 (I. p. 189). When they *tjeba* they take a little boy and a little girl, and lay them down together under a lion's skin, as if they were husband and wife, during all the time that they are fishing. The children keep quiet, — so the fish will also keep quiet and not swim away. When the fishing is concluded, these children are "awakened," and are given a part of the catch : they are praised and thanked, as they are supposed to have secured the fish by their action... or rather by their inaction! This very significant

132 than any other. The life of every individual, and consequently
731 of the whole clan, is threatened. Famine will certainly follow,
789 as cereals can only be sown during these two months and famine means not only suffering and anguish, but often death, in a primit.ve tribe which is totally ignorant of trade with out-lying countries, and does not possess any means of conveyance for food bought in other lands. No wonder therefore that the imagination of the South African Native has invented ways and means of regularising the rainfall, and that rites, and charms, and all the powers of magic have been resorted to with a view to ensuring the precious rain to the tribe at the right time.

789 These methods may be classified in two categories : the rites which aim at removing the causes which are believed to prevent rain and the charms by which the rain is made to fall, irrespective of any preventing cause.

a) *The causes which prevent rainfall and the rites by which they are removed.*

821 The general view is that rain comes *from the gods* : "Psikwembu
789 psi nisa mpfula" — "the spirits of the ancestors cause rain to fall."
782 So, should the spring showers not come in due time, the first idea will be to offer a sacrifice to the ancestor-gods, especially if the bones consulted have revealed that the anger of the gods is the real
[533] cause. Men will go to the sacred wood where the ancestors have been buried, sing there an ancient mourning song (I suppose No. 15, page 286, is used for the purpose), and some of them will beat the graves with sticks. As regards the sacrifice, it consists of a black victim, or it may even be the offering of a living human being to the gods ; these rites will be described later on.

Or it may be that a certain individual, *a wizard*, endowed with magical power, or rather possessing enchanted drugs, prevents the rain from falling (a siba mpfula) through wickedness, or hatred of his countrymen. This is a rarer occurrence.

000 But the terrible calamity of drought is brought into direct

193 conceptions were still current, it was considered as a feminine principle. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that *rivers* (nambu. pl. milambu) also have the feminine termination (I. p. 36, Note). I find the following names of rivers ending in *ti* : Nkomati, Nfoloti (Umbelosi), Ñwebeti, Shalati, Timbati ; the termination *etsi*, *edzi*, may be another form of the same suffix (Ñwanetsi, Ntsatsi, Shingwedzi, Madzi, etc.). A very curious fact, which shows the same conception, is that the river which crosses the territory of the Tembe clan is called Mi-Tembe. I first thought this to be a plural form of the mu-mi class ; but it is more natural to explain this *mi* as the feminine prefix (1) which means daughter of, as Migogwe, etc. (I. p. 352).

823 784 824 789 133 *Crossing rivers* is subject to a curious rule. It is taboo to bathe in the stream before crossing it ; taboo also for the traveller to cook his food on the hither side of the river ; he must first cross, and then take his meal. This rule is still universally observed by waggon trekkers in South Africa. In this case there may be a reason for the taboo : South African rivers are apt to be swollen in a moment by sudden rain, and the crossing made impossible for days : the traveller therefore makes haste ; he will have plenty of time to stop on the other side! When the river is dangerous, a Thonga will first chew (phora) a little of his *ndjao*, the root of a juncus, which is supposed to increase courage and to ensure victory over hostile influences. (See Part VI.)

823 769 776 782 Some *Lakes* and *Rivers* are believed to be inhabited by spirits, but not in the ordinary fetichistic way, in which a special spiritual being is incorporated with the natural object ; these spirits are *psikwembo*, spirits of the deceased ancestors of the owners of the land, and are propitiated by their descendants. Should another clan have invaded the territory where these lakes are, and crocodiles threaten the fishermen, (p. 88) they will call some one belonging to the clan of the old possessors of the country and ask him to make an offering to appease *his* gods. This is the ordinary course, and the more closely we search the more completely these lake and

(1) A number of river names have the prefix *li* or *ri*, especially those which are of Sutho origin : Lebvubye. Ritabi (Letaba) Ritshindjele (Letsitele), Rimbelule (Lepalula, Olifant). Others begin with *ñwa*, *ma*, and may be ancient names of men.

river spirits become identified with ancestor-gods. In my investigations I found one case, however, where a special spirit, a kind of Nature spirit seemed to be invoked. This was on the sea shore, in the northern part of Nondwane, at a place called Mahilane, where there are two great rocks on the beach. When the great waves dash against them, with a fearful roar, people go and sacrifice (hahla); they pray thus: "Tsu! Oh sea! Let vessels be wrecked, and steamers also, and let their riches come to us and help us." In former times, a young girl was sometimes exposed there as a prey, or an offering to the power of Mahilane. Now this is exactly what is done in the sacred woods for the ancestor gods and, in fact, Mboza asserts that: "When abandoning the girl, the officiant says: You, Psikwembo, ancestor-gods, drive on the sea that it may wreck vessels."

When urged to speak with more precision, my informant answered: "Mahilane and the sea are one and the same thing (ntshumu munwe). When the sea is roaring people exclaim: 'Mahilane roars'! Near the island of Shefin, where two branches of the Nkomati river meet in the estuary, people say: 'Makaneta is roaring'. Here it is Makaneta and no longer Mahilane."

This information is extremely interesting. As regards Makaneta, we know him perfectly well; he is the ancestor of Mboza and descendant of Mazwaya (I. p. 360). This ancestor-god begins to be confused with a natural phenomenon taking place in the country where he lived. The religious fear of the spirit of the deceased mingles with the awe inspired by the roaring of the sea to such an extent that both notions coincide in the imagination of the savage. We here note the exact point where *an ancestral spirit evolves into a Nature spirit*, and this instance proves, in the clearest possible manner, that the conception of the ancestor spirit preceded that of the Nature spirit. Here, at any rate, Ancestrolatry is anterior to both Fetichism and Naturism. These later forms of the belief can be easily accounted for by the development of Ancestrolatry: the reverse process would be much more difficult to explain.

The *sea*, with its immensity and its wonderful power, deeply impresses the Thongas dwelling near it. They do not however tell many stories about it, nor did I hear of any explanation

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

II. *The Means of Propitiation. Offerings and Sacrifices.*

It is no wonder, since these spirits are so terrible, that their descendants have sought means of propitiating them. The study of these rites is very interesting, and will throw more light on the ideas of the Bantus concerning their ancestor-gods. Some of these means of propitiation bear a magical character. For instance, when Mankhelu wished to induce the gods to sleep and leave him in peace, he took roots which had been brought to light naturally by a swollen river that had washed away the ground The reason is clear ; the gods are in the earth, therefore things found in the earth can influence them. So he cut these roots in small pieces, cooked them with the flesh of a goat, and drank the broth ; the assagai which killed the goat had been first smeared with a powder made of these roots. He fastened the astragalus of the goat on his ankle, on the right side if the god to be propitiated belonged to his father's family, and on the left if it was one of his mother's ancestors. If the propitiatory ceremony was performed for a woman, the astragalus was tied with a strap "en bandouillère" round her body.

769 782 789

We shall often see such *magic acts* performed in the ancestor worship of the Thongas. This is in keeping with their general conception of Nature, as already explained (p. 369), and with the magic principles or axioms of primitive mentality. But to the magic element is added the religious ; the officiant is aware that he intends to influence living, conscious and superior beings, therefore he has recourse above all to specifically *religious means*, viz., to offerings and prayers. He presents to his gods what he calls a *mhamba*, and not *miri*, charms or medicines similar to those employed in magic proper. We shall understand more fully what the word mhamba means when we have described the various kinds of offerings.

1) Classification of Offerings.

These offerings are much more complicated and varied than they at first seem. The following principles of classification may be applied to them :

782

782 1) *Individual and family offerings* — those which concern a man or his family alone, — and *national offerings* — those which concern the whole clan.

2) The *simple offerings* called *gandjela*, and the *sacramental ones*, accompanied by the famous *tsu* which constitutes them a *hahla* (Ro.) or a *phahla* (Dj.).

3) Offerings attended with *bloodshed*, and those where no victim is killed.

4) The *regular offerings*, made at certain dates, or in connection with definite events in the life of the family or of the clan, and those made in *special* circumstances.

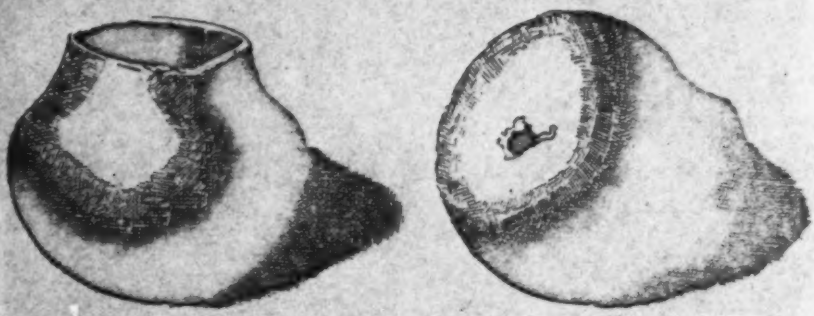
a) *Individual and Family Offerings.*

Simple Offerings (Gandjela).

782 778 Here the ritual is reduced to its minimum. The offering is made by the father of the family at the gandjelo, the altar, or place of worship. This is, as has already been pointed out, a little pot, placed at the right side of the entrance to the village, or under the tree designated by the bones (I. p. 320) (1). In some cases, especially if the headman is a medicine-man or magician, the gandjelo consists of a forked branch planted in the ground, either inside his hut, or in the very middle of the square. Such was the case in the village of Mankhelu (See illustration I. p. 5). His gandjelo was a branch of *nkonola* (or *nkonono*) ; this tree, the *mpfilu* and *shisalala* are the only trees which are used for the purpose. He had removed the bark in some places, and smeared the stems with his black powders, so that there were two dark rings of about 3 inches wide on the branch. A lot of curious things were to be seen hanging from the lateral branches : bags

621 778 782 (1) If there are people of different clans inhabiting the same village owing to the fact that foreigners have "kondza" i. e, have put themselves under the authority of the headman (I. p. 433), there will be a central gandjelo, the altar of the master of the village, at the foot of the sacred tree where offerings will be made for himself and his relatives ; but people of the other clans will have their own altars which will be placed near the main entrance, on the spot where the representatives of each of these clans assemble when discussing their own affairs.

full of roots, calabashes of different sizes, containing the precious drugs, pieces of the *ñwabola* shrub (p. 383), etc. When he had earned some money or acquired something by accident, Mankhelu used to put these objects near the stem, and leave them there for the night in order to inform his gods of his good fortune. At the foot of the branch the earth was smeared with black clay, forming a circle with a little furrow traced round the outside of it. Men who are not so important as this great *ñanga*, are contented with the



Sokis' mug. The altar of primitive mankind.

small pot I described before. This can be placed on the grave, if it happens to be near the village.

In the case of Sokis (I. p. 139) it was the *deceased's own mug* which was used, pierced at the bottom in order to allow the beer to sink easily into the ground, when an offering was made to the recently deceased by his relatives (1).

Regular offerings are brought to the altar by the headman. When he has finished preparing his *tobacco* for use, he carefully puts aside some leaves of it, and places them near the pot. When he has ground the tobacco for snuff he puts two little spoonsful

(1) I had the good fortune to obtain this mug, which may well be called the altar of primitive humanity! I offered Sokis' wife a small pig in exchange for it. She was quite willing to accept the bargain, but her sister-in-law made objections, doubtless fearing that the deceased might be angry... The widow answered her thus: "When he was living you refused him beer often enough! You may do the same now, and accept the little pig." Thanks to the common-sense view taken by Sokis' wife I am now in possession of this precious pierced mug, and in a position to give its facsimile in the accompanying plate.

782 into the pot, one for the paternal, the other for the maternal gods, saying as he does so :

Fole hi ledji! Tlanganan mi djaha, mi nga ndji hobilise loko ndji djaha fole, mi ku ndji mi tjona.

Here is some tobacco! Come all of you and take a pinch, and do not be angry with me when I snuff, nor say that I deprive you of your share.

Having made his offering, the headman must return to his seat, on the hubo, without looking behind him : this is a taboo.

Another way of gandjela is the offering of a piece of cloth (nturu), which may be tied at the entrance, or to the tree of the village (p. 333). Liquids also are poured into the gandjelo (I. p. 341) : beer, when a beer feast is to take place ; wine, when it has been bought at the neighbouring store ; palm-wine, when the big pot called gandjelo (see p. 43 for the explanation of this word in this particular connection) has been filled, and the precious drink has been brought to the village.

Occasional offerings are made, for instance, in a case of *shirwalo* (I. p. 406) when relatives-in-law have brought jars of beer. A little of the beer is first offered to the gods, in order that the pots may not get broken during the return journey. Another case is after a dream, in which the gods have asked for such and such an offering to be made (p. 385).

Sacramental Offerings or Ku Hahla (Ro.), Phahla (Dj.).

782 787 These are of much greater importance than the simple ones and also differ from them in two ways, viz., they are always ordered by the divinatory bones, and accompanied by the sacramental *tsu*. The bones are first consulted, and give many indications, e. g., what must be the nature of the offering ; to which god it must be consecrated ; in what place the act of worship must be performed, (in the hut, behind it, at the door, in the square, in the sacred wood, or in the bush). When the ceremony

takes place over the grave the bones reveal whether the officiant must stand at the head or at the foot. (See Chap. III, D. for the consultation of the bones). 782 787

The Offering of Bitterness. There is a progressive character in the offerings, according to the value of the gift accompanying the *tsu*. In some cases, all that is given to the gods is the small amount of saliva emitted in pronouncing the sacramental sound. These offerings are called "Offerings of Bitterness" (ku hahla hi shibiti), and form a most curious category. They are generally presented by a headman who is overwhelmed with sorrow, and deprived of everything. "He shows his misery by offering nothing but his saliva. He leans his head upon his shoulder with a look of profound sadness. His heart is bitter! He has nothing! He therefore does not try to win over his gods by presenting rich gifts to them. He wishes rather to gain their blessing by this appearance of abject misery. And they will indeed have pity on him!" (Mboza). This is certainly touching! But this kind of offering, though showing more individual piety than others, must only be made ritually, i. e., by order of the bones. The sacrifice of bitterness may be resorted to when no evil has as yet fallen on the village, as a preventive against misfortune. 782

The Offering of Charcoal. When a headman is in great difficulties, (quarrels in his village, disease amongst his people), the bones may order him to *hahla* with a piece of charcoal. He takes an extinct charcoal, puts it to his lips, utters the *tsu* and adds :

Akhwari! i. e. Smoothly! You, so and so. What you want is this. Abupsayi! i. e. Gently! This is fire! This is the mouth of the lion! Let what troubles me come to an end, etc.

The Offering of Earth. Earth is the offering of the chiefs, because they are the masters of the soil (I. p. 405). It can, however, also be used by subjects on various occasions. When the bones have not revealed that the disease was sent by the ancestor-gods, when they have not said that it was the work of wizards, then it is caused by "the earth, misaba" i. e. by some unknown people of the land (bhanu ba misaba). The bones say : "Go and seek the navel of the earth." The navel of the earth is the ant-heap. The officiant then takes a piece of termite nest and *hahla* with it. He 782 787

782 addresses his prayer to his ancestor-gods in order to be delivered
787 from his enemies.

The Offering of a Thorn (Mhamba ya Mutwa). This is also called *ku hahla ka shihlahla*, the sacrifice of the forest. The headman has seen that misfortune has fallen on his village ; all his people die, the village is about to disappear, to become merely a part of the bush. He goes to the forest, picks up a thorn there and accomplishes the religious act by sucking the thorn, and emitting his saliva. Then he returns to the forest and places the thorn where the bones have ordered him.

782 *The Offering of Contempt (Mhamba ya Litsaŋwa).* We have
783 already seen a case in which this offering is made. It is a compo-
824 nent part of the burial ritual (I. p. 142) and we have called it the rite of the twig. But it can be performed on other occasions also. In certain clans (Nkuna-Khosa, Hlengwe) it does not take place at the burial, but is of common use when someone wishes *to avoid contempt*, to be well received by those to whom he goes ; for instance when he goes to his debtors and fears that they may despise him and perhaps refuse to accept his claim, or when a young man goes to woo a girl and is afraid that she may not look favourably on his suit. The religious act is performed as follows. The officiant cuts a twig of the nkanye tree. We have often mentioned this tree, whose fruits are used to prepare the famous bukanye beer ; it is everywhere regarded as the best of trees, and highly valued. It is dioecious, as we have seen (I. p. 397). The twig must come from a female stem, if a man *hahla* for himself, from a male stem if a woman does so. The officiant bites the extremity of the twig till he has drawn a little of the sap into his mouth ; then he emits that sap together with his saliva, and proceeds to his prayer.

789 *The Offering of the Fig Tree (Mhamba ya Hlulawumbe).* This
792 tree is called shihlampfana or hlulawumbe. It frequently grows
824 as a parasite on another tree ; or surrounds it, growing close to its stem, and in this way kills it. If a man has enemies, if there are people who hate him, he digs up a bit of the root of this fig tree and uses it in making his prayer. These troublesome persons will be choked, destroyed, just like the stem close to which the hlulawumbe grows. (Hlulawumbe means to overcome others).

hlulawumbe grows, (Hlulawumbe means to overcome others) (1).

Offerings of the Medicine-men. The Native physicians are, as has already been pointed out, very pious. Their art having been handed down to them by their forefathers, as a family secret, they always implore the blessing of their ancestors on their various treatments. This is done by true offerings, performed with the *tsu* and a liturgical prayer. In Vol. I. p. 55, the religious ceremony which accompanies the monthly vapour bath administered to infants was described ; a religious rite takes place also in the hondola of the weaning (I. p. 59). These are typical cases. Another offering of the same nature is made on behalf of the man who is about to *start out on a journey*, for instance to Johannesburg. The doctor, having prepared the protective drugs in a pot, brings them to the entrance of the traveller's hut, and calls his "patient,"; then, taking a little of the decoction in his mouth, he spits it at him with the sacramental *tsu*, and prays in the following words :

Akhwari! Abusayi! Ndji hlaya psolepso! Khongelwa a nga dlawi. Ku dlawa phalaburena! Khombo a dji suke, dji ya ka Shiburi, dji ya ka Nkhabelane! A a fambe psinene, a kandjetela balala, mitwa mi yetlele, ku yetlela ni tindjau. A a ye nwa mati ya kone, ma mu tjhabisa hi djo thuka ledji.

Gently! Smoothly! I say so. Death does not come to him for whom prayer is made ; death only comes to him who trusts in his own strength! Let misfortune depart, let it go to Shiburi, and Nkhabelane (2). Let him travel safely ; let him trample on his enemies ; let thorns sleep, let lions sleep ; let him drink water wherever he goes, and let that water make him happy, by the strength of this leaf (viz., of my medicinal herbs).

(1) I may mention here another religious ceremony which is also called a mhamba, though I am not sure that a regular prayer is offered. It is the *Offering of a Stone*. Stones are almost totally lacking in Thongaland. But on the Swazi border, in the Lebombo hills, there are porphyrocous rocks, and when a Native passes a certain spot, on the Estcourt road, he picks up a stone, spits on it, touches both his knees with it and throws it on a heap made of the stones thrown by those who passed before him. This heap of stones is called *shitlhava*. This rite is said to be performed in order to call a blessing on the journey ; thus the traveller will find a favourable reception in the villages and be given plenty of food. This custom is wide-spread in many other tribes.

(2) The extremity of the land (Comp. I, p. 55).

782 To these words is generally added an invocation to the medicine-
756 man's gods, who are entreated to bless the drugs they have given
484 to their descendant, and to join with the traveller's gods in order to insure his success in this undertaking. The decoction is then used to wash the body of the young man. He will pay the fee on his return home.

224 *Offerings of Hunters.* This is called *byalwa bya ngenge*; the beer
782 of ngenge. This beer is made of maize grains which have been
273 crushed but not softened by long steeping in water, as is generally done in brewing ; they are then reduced to flour ; some water is poured on this and it is offered in that form by the head hunter, all his companions standing near him. They must start at once ; there is therefore no time to brew proper beer.

484 *Offerings of Travellers.* These also have their particular mhamba,
782 which is called *Lehika*. It consists of water alone which the officiant takes in his mouth and spits out, saying : "*Pff*!" (amongst the Hlengwes : "*Phaaa*"). "My ancestor-gods! May I find no difficulty
578 on my road, etc." This *water offering* is also made by a headman
782 whose village is troubled by endless disputes. The way of bringing them to an end is not clear. So he entreats his gods to "open the road, pfula ndlela," so that all hearts may be relieved. This will help him to "herd his village, ku byisa muti." The idea of finding a road clearly accounts for the fact that this offering is made under two sets of circumstances so different from one another. Why water is used to attain this end I do not know.

The offerings hitherto described bear a more or less individual character. Let us now consider those which are in direct relation to the life of the family.

782 *Regular Family Sacrifices.* We have seen these performed in
842 connection with the most important events in life. At the *weaning* (I. p. 58, this might however be termed a medical sacrifice), *on the marriage day*, either publicly, as amongst the Ronga clans (I. p. 110), or privately, by the bride's father alone, as is the custom amongst the Nkunas (I. p. 118). The gods are entreated to give the newly married woman "timbeleko," births, i. e., children, as it seems that the power of begetting depends directly
000 on the gods. Regular acts of worship are performed also at the

Regular acts of worship are performed also at the
burial (I. p. 142), at the *crushing of the hut* (I. p. 158-163), on the 782
days of *mahloko* (I. p. 215), and at the *adjudication of the inheritance* 765
(I. p. 208). 262

I have already mentioned the stringent taboo in regard to the victims killed in these sacrifices. The portions distributed amongst the different relations must not be eaten either in the village of the deceased, or in those of the various visitors. This meat must be roasted on the road, and eaten on the spot, and it is likewise taboo to season it in any way. The inhabitants of the deceased's village can eat the meat boiled, but it is prohibited to add ground-nuts to the broth.

These are the great family sacrifices, in which the uterine 782
nephews play their curious part, and on the occasion of which family matters are brought up and settled. They play a most important part in the life of the family, and I have therefore described them at length, when treating of the social life of the tribe, as religion and social life are here intimately united. There is therefore no need for me to add much more regarding them here. With their clearly established and typical ritual they form the most definite and settled element of the religious life of the tribe.

Rangane asserts that another offering is regularly performed in the Maluleke district. On the first occasion of the *cooking of the new mealies*, each headman prepares a little of the flour, takes a spoonful of it, and throws it away, praying at the same time to the Ba-Nyai spirits, i. e., the gods of the Ba-Nyai, who have been conquered by the Malulekes. He calls this "magandjelo ya ku ñwantseka," i. e., "sacrifice tasted and thrown away." This is evidently to propitiate the gods, who were the first owners of the country and who might harm or destroy the invaders. Compare p. 377 the respect shown by Mahazule to the Libombo sacred wood, and also the curious request of the Samaritans, II Kings. XVII.

Special Family Sacrifices. By these, I mean particularly those 782
offered *in cases of disease*. The bones having revealed that the 755
disease is caused by the gods (and not by wizards, nor by Heaven, nor by contamination, which are three other possibilities), and also that it comes from such and such a god, a god of bitterness, or a god

782 of the paternal or the maternal line, now indicate the nature of
755 the offering which must be made, the place, and sometimes even the person who must make it. Here is the detailed description, given by Viguet, of a sacrifice made for a ntukulu, a uterine nephew, who is ill : — "Suppose," says Viguet, "that I am the sick child. The bones have said that an offering must be made to the gods of our *bakokwana* (mother's family) ; so we go to our maternal relatives, to my *malume*, and ask him to perform the sacrifice. The offering may consist of a hen or an ornament like a bracelet. If it is a hen, my malume will kill it in accordance with the ceremonial rite, take a few of the feathers of the neck, which have been soiled by the blood, put them to his mouth, and spit on them, making *tsu* (the blood of the victim thus mingles with the saliva of the priest), and say (bulabulela) :

You, our gods, and you so and so, here is our mhamba (offering)! Bless this child, and make him live and grow ; make him rich, so that when we visit him, he may be able to kill an ox for us... You are useless, you gods ; you only give us trouble! For, although we give you offerings, you do not listen to us! We are deprived of everything! You, so and so (naming the god, to whom the offering must be addressed in accordance with the decree pronounced by the bones, i. e., the god who was angry, and who induced the other gods to come and do harm to the village, by making the child ill), you are full of hatred! You do not enrich us! All those who succeed, do so by the help of their gods! — Now we have made you this gift! Call your ancestors so and so ; call also the gods of this sick boy's father, because his father's people did not steal his mother : these people, of such and such a clan, came in the daylight (to lobola the mother). So come here to the altar! Eat and distribute amongst yourselves our ox (the hen!) according to your wisdom.

Then the priest takes a feather from one of the wings, a claw of the left foot and the beak, and after tying them together, attaches them to the left wrist or left ankle of the child, or to his neck, passing the string over the shoulder and under the left arm ; (all is on the left side, because it is an offering to the gods of the mother's family ; it would be on the right side if it were to the

gods of the father). These parts of the victim are called *psirungulo*, the religious amulet. 782 755

When the offering consists of a bracelet, the bones having so ordered, the priest will pour consecrated beer over it, and say his prayer. The bracelet will then be fastened to the child's foot. He may not remove it, nor exchange it for anything else : it belongs to the gods.

This description, given by Viguet, is typical of sacrifices offered in the case of disease. In the Maluleke clan the sacrifice made for a sick person is as follows. The headman takes beer, which has been specially prepared for the gods and is very much diluted, the beer called *byala bosila*, and a twig of male nkanye. He orders the patient to sit near the altar, and after dipping the twig into the beer, sucks it and says the following words :

Phaa! (this word corresponds to tsu) : this is byala bosila, you Makhima! Take it and convey it to your father Mashakadzi ; call each other and come here together to drink! Let all disease depart! Heal this man!

I must also mention the sacrifice performed in the curious ceremony of *dlaya shilongo*, in the case of marriage between near relatives (I. p. 258), and will now proceed to describe two others, viz., the sacrifice on behalf of the son who has just returned from Johannesburg, and the sacrifice of reconciliation.

When a young man, who has been absent from home for a long time, *returns to his village*, he cannot be received again into the community without special precautions being taken. If there has been a death in the kraal he must be purified from the collective contamination before eating the food of the village. This is the luma milomo (I. p. 146), and is connected with the defilement from death. Some of the provisions of the deceased, kept in a pot and diluted with hot water, must be poured between his two great toes, and he must afterwards rub them together. But, before this, a religious act is performed. Before the boy, who is on the return journey, is allowed to enter his native village, he has to stay for a short time just outside, while his father, seated at the main entrance, cuts open the neck of a hen, which he has 782 783 484

782 783 484 previously selected, and throws it on the boy's luggage. The victim leaps about (phuphumela) in its agony. The officiant then plucks out some of the bloodstained feathers, pronounces the tsu, and says :

> Here is your son. He has returned home safely, because you have accompanied him! Perhaps he has brought back pounds sterling with him to lobola. Perhaps he will now take a wife! I do not know. The great thing is that he is healthy, and you have brought him back safely.

782 578 593 *The Offering of Reconciliation.* One of the most curious of the religious acts performed in connection with the family is called *ku hahlela madjieta*, viz., to perform a sacramental act in connection with the madjieta. *Djieta* (dji-ma) means a *rash oath*, or an oath *with imprecation*. If two brothers quarrel, and the younger believing himself to be the injured one, breaks off all connection with his brother, he may say to the latter in his anger : "Never will I speak to you again, or come any more to your village!" This is a djieta. To give greater weight to the imprecation, the angry brother will put his nail beneath one of his incisor teeth, push it from within outwards and say : "U ta kota u *ñwoo* psi nga yentshekanga!" This probably means : "May you die if this does not happen," viz. if I do not keep my oath. Or he will pinch up the skin below his eye, and pull it out, saying : "U ta kota wao *hum*!" (Same meaning). The two men may remain for years without the slightest intercourse with each other. But if a serious disease should break out in the village of the younger, and the bones order him to make an offering, he is at once in a difficulty. He has no right to present it himself, for, according to the great law of priesthood in ancestrolatry, it is his elder brother who must do it for him. The bones, on being again consulted, give the response : — "There is something in the way. You two have tied a knot. Untie it first, then offer the sacrifice." The younger brother will then go to the elder, and say : "I have sinned in swearing that I would never come again to your village. Let us hahlela djieta, i. e., accomplish the sacrificial act, which will

cancel the rash oath (1). The elder will scold him severely, but will eventually accept his excuses. This meeting for confession and reconciliation is called ku hahlela madjieta, even if no other act, no *tsu*, or prayer, is performed. — The reconciliation may, however, be celebrated in a more solemn manner by a ceremony, which is attended by the elder members of the family. The brother who pronounced the imprecation prepares a decoction of a special herb, called mudahomu, and pours it into a sala shell. Everyone assembles on the square, and the two former enemies sit in the midst, on the bare ground. The offender raises the shell to his lips, sips the decoction, spits it out with the customary tsu, and says : "This is our djieta. We pronounced it, because our hearts were bitter. To-day it must come to an end. It is right that we make peace." The other brother, the offended one, then takes the shell, and after going through the same rite of the tsu, says : "I was justly angry, because it was he who first offended me! But let it be ended to-day ; let us eat out of the same spoon, drink out of the same cup, and be friends again." Then he breaks the shell, and they drink and enjoy themselves together.

In the Northern clans this offering is called *byalwa bya huwa, the beer of noise* (on account of the noise made by those who quarelled). It is considered as necessary, not only to reconcile the estranged brothers, but as a protection against wizards. Wizards might be encouraged to bewitch these men, thinking that, if one of them met with misfortune, people would say that his brother had cast a spell over him ; the wizards would then have an opportunity of killing him without fear of being discovered! The offering consists of *many sorts of cereals*, mealies, millet, sorgho taken from the granaries of all those who have fought ; two handfuls of the

(1) See also my article on "The Sacrifice of Reconciliation" amongst the Ba-Ronga (*South African Journal of Science*, February 1911). The djieta is any rash oath, and not only one pronounced against a brother. If a man swears that he will never enter a pool again (because he has been stung), or a river (because he has been followed by a crocodile), it is likewise a *djieta*. Should he find it necessary to enter this lake or this river again, he must first hahlela djieta, i. e. cancel his oath by a sacramental act. This is not necessarily a prayer to his gods, but only an invocation addressed to the imprecation itself: "You djieta, I said I would enter this lake no more, but I want to *tjoba* (p. 86) and to eat fish-! Don't cause me to suffer for it." Then he takes some water in his hands, and throws it into the pool.

578 grains are brought to the altar and thrown on to it and the brothers
782 who wish to be reconciled recount their grievances. The offering,
513 though called beer of noise, is not really beer at all, (the cereals offered are not ground nor cooked). However, as my informant said, it is truly beer, as these raw cereals *represent* beer. Natives do not think that they have said anything contradictory in expressing themselves in this way! Notice the fact that these cereals are collected from all the granaries (Tembe). In the same manner the members of the whole family must be reconciled.

782 The same offering is resorted to in *cases of protracted births*
846 (I. p. 40) when it is known that the woman in labour lived on bad
573 terms with another woman. The latter will be called ; she will take a little water in her mouth and spit it out against the hypogastrium of the other, saying *phaa* with the following words : "The angry words which we have spoken must come to an end. May you find help. (Lepsi hi nga bulabula psi fanele ku hela, u pfuneka)". This prayer will not be accompanied by an invocation of the ancestor-gods of either of these women. A similar ceremony is performed when the bones have revealed that delay in parturition or in the child's taking the maternal breast is due to the *bitterness* of its parents in their previous relations. The diviner will tell the father "Hahlela shibiti, make an offering on account of bitterness." This will be performed in the hut. The father will come, and without putting anything into his mouth he will say *tsu* and add the following words : "Let her give birth to the child! What I had (in my heart) I have left! Let us be united again. (A a beleke! Lepsi ndji nga na psu ndji psi tjikile! Hi tlhangana kambe)." In this case the offering is also called an offering of bitterness, though it is very different from the one previously described under that name.

782 *Offering of "the Big millet" (mabele makuku).* The millet (mabele or ñwahuba) is the smallest of the cereals cultivated by the Thongas ; this offering, however, is called "big" on account of its importance and its character. It is a true *thanksgiving offering*. When the family has special cause for rejoicing, for instance if there has been serious illness and the patient has recovered, all its members are called together for the offering of the "big millet."

782

Let us remember that this cereal is probably the most ancient known to the Thongas. If a daughter is living far away at her husband's home, she must come and bring him with her, because an ox will be killed, if possible, or at any rate a goat. A preliminary ceremony is performed to announce (hlehleleta) to the ancestor-gods that an ox is prepared for them. If the cause of the rejoicing is the safe return of a son who has been absent for a long time, working at Kimberley, for instance, his gun is brought to the altar and also the living ox, and the officiant thanks his gods by offering "byala bosila, ground beer". (See later). When the true beer is brewed, i. e. some days later, the second ceremony takes place, all being present ; the ox is killed, and the offering of the animal and of the millet beer is made, the *psanyi* of the victim being poured on to the altar, and also a little of the beer. During the prayer of thanksgiving the women shout their mikulungwana after each sentence of which they particularly approve. This is one of the rare offerings not dictated by fear or misfortune.

Before passing to the next topic, the National Offerings, I wish to quote a graphic description of a religious ceremony performed near the Shiluvane Mission Station by the Makaringe family, and attended by 200 members of this sub-clan. These Makaringes live amongst the Nkunas, but belong to the clan of Ba-ka- Baloyi, settled near the confluence of the Olifant and the Limpopo. I owe this description to the Rev. A. Jaques, together with the photograph which accompanies it. I do not know to what category this offering belongs. No particularly sad event had happened to account for it, so that it is quite possible that it was also a thanksgiving offering. I will let the Rev. A. Jaques describe the event :

"In January 1924 I had the opportunity of attending a sacrifice of the Makaringes. The ceremony took place on the graves of their ancestors, on the hill which is at the foot of the Marobunye mountain. Those present numbered about 200.

A first libation of beer was made on the spot where the old men knew the graves to be. The chief of the clan, the old induna Mugwaleni, officiated. Squatting on his heels, he held in his hands the twig of a female nkanye ; this he put into his mouth and spat twice, producing the sacramental sound tsu. Then he poured out some beer, invoking the

782. ancestor-gods. All the members of the clan squatting in a circle round him clapped their hands in cadence, the palms slightly curved, in such a way that the clapping produces a hollow noise. This is the respectful manner of saluting the bakoñwana, the wife's parents and the mpselekulobye, (a term which designates the father and mother of a son-in-law or of a daughter-in-law). This way of saluting intimates the respect shown to the ancestors.

Then the victim (in this case a cow) was killed. A young man tried to

Photo A. Jaques.

The sacrifice offered by the Makaringe family to its ancestor-gods in Shiluvane (January 1924).

pierce its heart with an assegai. (Curiously enough I have observed that the Thongas always stab the animal on the right side.) But on this occasion the ill-directed weapon struck the breast plate, and the badly-tempered iron was bent aside. It was a painful sight, but happily somebody knocked the animal down with an axe.

When it had been cut open, the second sacrifice took place. Someone brought on a plate the portion reserved for the spirits, consisting of a piece of the ear, of the tongue, of the forelegs, of one of the hindlegs, of the heart, of the liver, of the bowels and all the grass contained in the first stomach.

The circle is again formed and those present take up the same positions. Mugwaleni seizes each of the portions one after the other and places them on the ground, addressing himself to the dead; he calls them by their names, speaking to them in a familiar manner and begs for

782 their protection : "May the harvest be plentiful ; may the cattle multiply ; may all our wives become pregnant." He uses by preference negative expressions : "Be not angry against us ; may the cows not slip their calves ; may our wives have no miscarriages, etc." In the meantime the people continue the same clapping of hands (called ku diya or ku losa gupsi, gupsi expressing exactly the hollow sound produced by the curved hands).

Notwithstanding this ritual clapping of hands, not much respect is shown by those present. They chat and joke whilst the chief of the clan is praying. A little tobacco has been spread as a libation on the graves and all help themselves to it. The influence of European ideas can be noticed ; a man cries : "Take off your hats!" and most of the men obey, showing that they are conscious that this is a religious ceremony worthy of respect.

As soon as the ceremony is over, they begin to dance. Immediately the clapping changes. It is now done with the hands held flat. It is chiefly the women, especially the old ones, who dance. Gabaze, the principal wife of the Nkuna chief Muhlaba, who is a Makaringe, the sister of Mugwaleni, makes herself conspicuous by her contortions. These are the ordinary dances.

They eat the roasted meat ; they drink the beer brought by the women. The portions offered to the manes are eaten as well as the rest, and I did not observe that they were reserved to special persons. The skin of the victim is cut into small strips which the men tie round the right wrist, the women round the left."

b) *National Offerings.*

782 These are those offered at the capital, to the ancestors of the
769 chief, but on behalf of the whole clan, because the gods of the
796 reigning family have control over the clan, just as the chief has
554 over the families of his subjects.

The regular national offering is the *luma* of the first fruits, their consecration, which I have described at length as one of the principal manifestations of the National life (I. p. 396-406). The Bantu conception of hierarchy is clearly illustrated by this custom : the gods must be the first to enjoy the produce of the new year, then the chief, the sub-chiefs, the counsellors, the

782 headmen, then the younger brothers in order of age. There
769 is a stringent taboo directed against the person who precedes
796 his superiors in the enjoyment of the first fruits, this law being
554 applicable to Kafir corn or bukanye in certain clans, and also to sorghum, pumpkin leaves and beer, etc., in others (1).

834 The sexual taboo is also enforced. Those who contravene this
782 law are said to "destroy the efficacity of the offering, nyumbisa mhamba." At the Ngoni Court, where sexual excesses were prevalent (see I. Annotatio 14) it is said that the chiefs used to remain continent for a fortnight at the time of luma. The reason of this taboo is probably the fact that the luma signifies the entering upon a new year, a new season, and is thus a rite of passage.

782 The religious meaning of the rite is clear : the gods, if deprived of the right they possess by virtue of their hierarchical position, would avenge themselves by threatening the harvest ; so they must be given their share first.

In the Maluleke clan, in which the customs seem to have been influenced by the Ba-Nyai, there is also a regular offering at the capital, when *the crops are still growing*. Rangane describes it as follows : "When the chief sees that the Kafir corn is threatened by the vermin in the fields, he says : "Perhaps the masters of the country (i. e. my ancestors who are dead) are angry ; perhaps I have not worshipped them fittingly." He summons the sons of the royal family (mangalakana) from all parts of the country, prepares beer, and selects a goat for the sacrifice ; they assemble around the graves with the sons and the uterine nephews, where they worship, and then, after eating all that is to be eaten, they return."

The special national offerings are those in connection with rain. If the rain falls at the right season, the sacrifice will not be made ; but should it fail to do so, the whole ritual will be gone through. This sacrifice for rain, is, as has already been mentioned (p. 318) called *phokolo* amongst the Bilen clans, and is performed in the

(1) Amongst the Malulekes a *second luma* is necessary after harvest, when brewing the first beer. It seems that the sub-chiefs or even headmen, settled in districts far away from the capital, can obtain a special license to perform the luma ceremony on their own account, but they must first apply for this permission, and after having finished, they must forward the chief's share to him.

following way. The bones are consulted, and a special pot, called phokolo, is buried just below the surface of the ground, in the middle of a clean spot well hidden in a dense thicket of thorny shrubs. The victim, a black ram without any white spot, is brought there, and killed in accordance with the ceremonial rites. The grass of the paunch is squeezed over the pot, so that the green liquid drips into it, and the blood is spread all over the ground. Four furrows have been dug in the form of a cross with the pot as a centre, and pointing towards the four cardinal points. Little girls ("who are not yet wise," i. e. they are not yet informed regarding sexual matters) are sent to fetch water and fill the pot until it overflows into the furrows. This being done, they go back to their mothers. The *mbelele* rite will immediately follow (p. 318). This phokolo sacrifice is the religious act in connection with ancestrolatry, the mbelele being actuated by entirely different ideas. The phokolo rite is replaced in the Nkuna clan by the official visit to the graves, accompanied by an old mourning song, and the custom of beating the mounds with sticks ; (whether to awaken the gods or to show them the dissatisfaction of the worshippers, I do not know). In many sacred woods, a living *human victim* is offered to the gods, as already mentioned (p. 383). The phokolo rite is a regular sacrifice attended with bloodshed. 782

In the case of war threatening the country, another offering is made which is called *Mhamba ya Burena, the Offering of Valour*. The general of the army chooses a thorn, a large thorn taken from a munga tree (the Accacia horrida), not a crooked one ; he sucks it without biting it, and emits his saliva saying : "Tsu! You, the ancestor-gods, so and so and so, enemies wish to take your country! Give us valour! May we stab them with this thorn, with the assegai! (Ñwi, psikwembu, man, man, man. Yimpi yi ta, yi ta teka tiko djenu! Hi nyikan burena, hi ba tlhaba hi mutwa lo, hi tlhari!)" This offering resembles the offering of the thorn made by the headman, but it has an entirely different meaning, and it is probable that the kind of thorn employed is different. 721 782

Another national act of worship, which recalls the rite of the nkanye twig in funeral ceremonies, is performed with the aid of the *great mhamha*, to which I have already referred 778 782

778 (I. p. 386). This is a most curious object, the mhamba par excel-
782 lence, in the Tembe and Zihlahla clans. It is so highly venerated that people fear to call it by its own name, and refer to it as hlengwe, riches. According to the description of Hlekisa, (a Tembe Native), it consists of the nails and hair of the deceased chiefs. When a chief dies, the more or less imperishable portions of his body, such as the nails and the hair of his head and beard, are carefully cut, kneaded together with the dung of the oxen which have been killed at his death, and a kind of pellet is thus made. This is bound round with thongs of hide. When another chief dies, a second pellet is made and added to the first, and so on down through centuries. The mhamba of the Tembe clan is at the present time about one foot in length, says my informant, who is a cousin of the man to whose custody this sacred relic has been committed, and who has seen it often. The guardian must be of a particularly calm temperament, and must not be given to the use of strong language, nor to intoxication. The chief gives him money or perhaps a wife, for his trouble, because of the responsibility which he has undertaken towards the country. He keeps the mhamba in a hut specially built for the purpose, at the back of his own village. Whenever he is called upon to use it for a religious purpose, he must abstain from sexual relations for a whole month. The sacrifice then performed will consist of a goat, slaughtered in the usual way, but consecrated without the ordinary tsu. The tsu is replaced by the mhamba, which the officiant will brandish in the same way as the nkanye twig (I. p. 142) in the funeral ceremony, tracing circles in the air, and invoking the gods. — This object is wrapped in great mystery. Mboza thinks that the *ntjobo* of the Nondwane, kept in the sacred hut of nyokwekulu (I. p. 386), the national medicine, was the same thing, but most people were ignorant of what it consisted. At any rate the same law applied to both : it was looked on as the greatest calamity for it to fall into the hands of enemies in time of war. When the clan is forced to seek refuge in flight, the keeper of the mhamba is the first to flee. The whole army stands between the guardian of the precious amulet of the clan and the enemy. It is more than its flag, and will not be taken until all the warriors have been killed

or dispersed. — It is said that once during the war between Tembe and Maputju, the latter succeeded in gaining possession of the mhamba ; a terrible drought ensued, for the gods of Maputju were irritated, as they were of the same family as those of Tembe (I. p. 329). Not knowing what to do with it, the Maputjus at length cut open a goat between the hind legs, and introduced the mhamba into its body. They then led the goat to the river which marks the boundary of the Tembe country, and threw it into the water. Hlekisa's grandfather, a Tembe man, who had settled in Maputju, was asked to lead the goat. — Thus the rightful owners recovered their mhamba. (Is there not a striking resemblance between this story and that of the capture of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines?) 778 782

The mhamba of the Zihlahla country used to be kept by a man named Petshela, who carried it with him from place to place, when fleeing, refusing to trust it to the care of any save his own children. Is it still in existence, since the clan was deprived of its independence? In Nondwane the national amulet was in the care of the Godhlela family, as already mentioned in I. p. 388, and this function was hereditary.

The story *of the great mhamba of the Shirindja clan* (between Nondwane and Manyisa) is even more impressive than those told about the palladium of Tembe and Zihlahla. The man who revealed these mysteries to me did so somewhat reluctantly, saying that those who give information about them may die! In this clan the mhamba consists of *the skin of the faces of the deceased chiefs.* As soon as a chief is dead, the great ñanga Manketwana removes the skin from his forehead down to his chin and spreads it on the ground, the edges being fixed down by sticks all round in order that it shall dry without shrivelling. He also cuts off the fingers. The whole is then handed over to an old woman who no longer has sexual relations, the wife of one of the sub-chiefs. She adds this skin to those of the ancient chiefs and keeps the bundle in a special hut, the hut of the mhamba, built behind the principal hut of the new chief, in which she sleeps. No one is allowed to enter it ; married men in particular must not do so ; and a woman only if the child she carries on her shoulders has not yet passed through

778 the ceremony of tying the cotton string (I. p. 56. Sexual relations
782 have been prohibited to her from the birth of her child up to the performance of this rite. She is consequently pure). The chief may penetrate into it, but only if he has abstained from intercourse with his wives for a whole week. Mankentwane himself must observe this law, otherwise the "medicine, muri" would be spoiled and lose all its virtue. (The sexual taboo, in this case, is evidently dictated by the fact that the mhamba is directly connected with military matters, as we shall see. Compare I. p. 470.) In this sacred hut the old woman constantly keeps up a fire which is maintained with the logs of a certain tree, called shibondjwane, cut by the subjects at the command of the chief. Now and again she exposes the skins to the rays of the sun in order to kill the worms which attack them. Should enemies invade the country, she escapes, carrying the bundle in a mat. If they come up with her, she at once disappears (nyumba) leaving the mat on the spot. As soon as an enemy has taken hold of it, he becomes insane ; he begins to wander about in the bush, unable to return home. When the war is over, the old woman goes to the place where she left the mhamba ; if she does not immediately find it there, her heart is not in the least troubled. The bones are thrown, and reveal where the mhamba has been put by the enemy. Two days
778 do not elapse before it is found! The great mhamba is used first
782 of all for the preparation of military expeditions. A small portion
726 of the fingers and of the faces is cut off and these pieces are mixed with the other war charms ; a pill is made and placed on a piece of broken pottery over a fire in the sacred wood. All the warriors pass by one after the other and expose their assegais, their legs, and their faces to the smoke ; finally the great ñanga puts the fire out and the army is ready to start. But the Shirindja mhamba also plays a great part in the National religious ceremonies, as in the other clans (1).

171 (1) It is interesting to compare the Thonga *great mhamba* with two objects found
778 amongst other Bantu tribes. The first of these is the *bytri* of the Pahuins of the French Congo. This is a most powerful fetish consisting of a skull kept in a box in the huts of these people, in a dark corner; it is used as a means of obtaining wealth and of discovering wizards. In former times it is said to have been the skull of the father of the owner of the hut which had been dug up by him and smeared with drugs. In

2) The Main Elements of Ancestor Worship.

The sequence of the religious ceremonies in a typical sacrifice, like that performed at the crushing of the hut, is as follows : 769 782

1) The bones are first consulted, and reveal to what god, when, how, and by whom the sacrifice must be made.

2) The officiant, who is as a rule the eldest male member of the family, comes and presides over the sacrifice.

3) The victims are brought by those who have either been designated, or who have volunteered to provide them.

4) They are killed by the uterine nephews, the goats or sheep by piercing the heart, the hens by cutting the throat. Sometimes the face of the goat is directed to a certain point of the horizon.

5) The victim bleats, or if it is a hen, jumps about on the ground in its agony. At each thrust of the assagay, or of the

order to secure this much desired object as soon as possible, the son would go so far as to poison his father. Now, according to the testimony of Mr. F. Grébert (*Au Gabon*, p. 154), the byeri is not necessarily the skull of an ancestor. Any skull can be used, either that of a traveller found dead on the caravan route or even the skull of a man belonging to a foreign clan who has been assassinated. The byeri, whatever may be its origin, acts by its own power and no longer on account of its connection with the spirit of an ancestor. It is a true fetish, a material, magical object which is able to kill or to enrich in virtue of its own power. The Thonga mhamba is not a fetish. Its power is never dissociated from the spirits of the old chiefs whose nails, hair or faces have been used to produce it. Whatever action it may have is due to the fact that these nails, hair or faces influence the dead chiefs to whom they belonged, according to the magic principle that the part acts on the whole. The origin of the byeri is certainly ancestor-worship, but here ancestrolatry has evolved into fetichism, and I conclude from these facts that Thonga ancestrolatry is simpler, more spiritualistic and must therefore be more ancient than the present Pahuin system. 171 778

Amongst the Ba-Ganda (see Rev. J. Roscoe, *the Baganda*) there are powerful gods who have their priests and mediums, and are worshipped according to a complicated ritual, one of them being the war-god Kibuka. They have their temples, in which there is a sacred shrine placed on a stool. The shrine of Kibuka was secured and sent to the Museum of Ethnology at Cambridge, and it was found to contain, together with other objects, a bag with a human jawbone, the male organ and a decorated umbilical cord. This is a proof that the god Kibuka is an ancestor-god, whatever may be the splendour to which his worship has attained in the course of time. And here again we are in presence of what seems to be a later form of ancestrolatry, most probably evolved in consequence of the development of the social system of the Baganda. They form a nation with a powerful royal family, more than one thousand years old. With them the spirits of the dead kings hover round their jawbones, just as they are influenced by their nails, hair or faces amongst the Thongas, who would seem to be in a less advanced stage of evolution.

782 knife, the uterine nephews utter their cries of joy (1). This
769 is their way of consenting (pfumela) or answering, for they accept the offering on behalf of the gods (2). The whole crowd joins in these manifestations of joy.

6) The victim is cut open, and one limb, or small pieces of each limb, are put aside for the gods ; the half digested grass, *psanyi*, found in the intestines, especially in the *shihlakahla* stomach, is carefully put aside.

7) The priest takes a little of the psanyi mixed with the blood of the victim, puts it to his lips, emits a little saliva, and spits out the whole, pronouncing the *tsu*, this being the means of consecrating the offering, or, as we may say, despatching it to the gods.

8) He pronounces the prayer — occasionally interrupted by some member of the family, who has a complaint to make.

9) In certain cases of special misfortune, whilst praying he squeezes the green liquid contained in the psanyi over his hearers, who rub their bodies with it.

10) One of the nephews "cuts his prayer" (i. e. brings it to an end) by taking in his mouth a little of the consecrated beer or wine, or part of the hen's gizzard.

11) The uterine nephews steal the offering and run away, followed by the throng, who throw pellets of psanyi at them. They eat the portion of the gods.

12) Should the offering have been made on behalf of a particular individual, the astragalus of the goat, or some portions of the hen are tied to him and worn for a time on the left or right side of the body : the left if the offering was made to the maternal ancestors, the right if it was made to the paternal gods.

Let us examine more closely some of these acts, so that we may better understand the elements of this ceremony.

(1) Amongst the Ba Nyai they clap their hands and shout: "Ndiyo!" — "all right."

782 (2) It is not necessary to add more about the part played by the uterine nephews in
604 the sacrifice, for it has been explained in detail in Vol. I, p. 269 when treating of the family system. The two great reasons for their taking such a prominent part in the religious ritual seem to be the following : 1) during the life of their maternal uncle, and also of all their mother's family, they were on very intimate terms with them, "even eating from the same piece of food, not fearing their saliva." Therefore they now eat the flesh of the victim instead of the ancester-gods of their mother. 2) Maternal relatives have a special religious duty towards their nephews. They act as their priests

a) *The Priesthood.*

The Thongas have no sacerdotal caste, but, as has already been pointed out, the right of officiating in religious ceremonies is strictly confined to *the eldest brother*. All offerings must be made through him. To supplant him is a great taboo, and would entail the malediction of the gods, and even the death of the offender. There are, however, some minor offerings which anyone is allowed to make to his gods ; for instance, a lover who has been jilted, may, after having consulted the bones, give something to his god in order to obtain his aid in regaining the favour of the girl he loves. But, as a rule, no one must *hahla*, or even *gandjela*, before the death of his parents. If, after their death, their son should happen to dream of them, he must offer worship to the deceased by pouring some ground tobacco on to his wooden pillow, this being the commencement of his religious functions : "he begins to learn to gandjela" (Rangane), and, if he is the eldest, he may in course of time become the priest of the whole family. I heard, however, a man from Tembe assert that he had *hahla* when his father was still living, but in this case he had been designated by the bones. A little child may even perform the office if the bones order it ; his father will then hold him in his arms and pray in his stead. The bones often call on *women* to pronounce the prayer, especially the elder sister ; there is no anti-feminism in Thonga religion. In the *luma* ceremony, however, it must always be a man, the chief himself, who is the principal officiant. The wives of the clansmen naturally cannot take a prominent part in the offerings made for the clan, being themselves members of another clan and having their own ancestor-gods, to

(I. p. 268), offerings being frequently made to the gods of the mother's family through the agency of the maternal uncle. Hence the fact that uterine nephews take such a peculiar part in the ritual of the worship.

I must add that according to information just received from the Rev. A. Jaques, in the Northern clans uterine nephews do not steal the portion of the offerings put apart for the ancestor-gods. It seems that this custom, which I believe to be ancient, is met with essentially amongst the Ronga clans, where the special term *mupsyana* (an old Banta word corresponding to *um-tshana* in Xosa and *mochana* in Sutho) has also been preserved to designate the uterine nephew, whilst it has fallen into disuse in the Northern clans. (Compare I. p. 162, 232, 498.)

782 whom they sometimes pray in the hut (See App. IV). Amongst
593 Thongas the wife does not adopt the gods of her husband's
793 family (1).

The beginnings of the *constitution of a sacerdotal caste* may be seen in the fact that in each clan, the mhamba, the sacred object used by the royal family to invoke its gods, or the drug on which national invulnerability depends, is entrusted to the care of a certain man, whose office is hereditary. As soon as the political tie becomes stronger, and the power of the paramount chief greater, the religious acts which are performed at the capital gain in importance, and the person who officiates becomes a kind of high priest. Should this evolution continue, it is easy to see how a sacerdotal class may be formed at the expense of the primitive family worship, which thus increasingly loses its importance. Amongst the Thongas this has not yet taken place, and their religious system seems to correspond to a very ancient state of things ; it is in all probability the pure form of primitive Ancestrolatry.

b) The Thonga Conception of the Offerings.

782 With the help of new information obtained since writing the
778 first edition of this book, I think it now possible to attain to a fuller
789 understanding of the meaning of this great Thonga word *mhamba* which I have translated either by offering or by sacrifice, in connection with the killing of a victim. Under this designation come objects of two distinct categories : articles of food, clothing, etc. which are of immediate service to human existence and which are *given* to the ancestor-gods, and magic or magico-religious objects which are not given but only employed in the act of worship. The aim is the same, whatever may be the nature of the object, viz. to obtain the favour and help of the ancestor-gods, but in the first case the officiant adresses himself to living, conscious

(1) There seems to be a profound difference between Thongas and Suthos on this point. The Rev. P. Ramseyer assured me on very good evidence that in Basutoland "a wife takes the family name (seboko) of her husband and abandons her *midimo*." The midimo, says my informant, are not only the *badimo* proper, i. e. the ancestor-gods, but all the supernatural powers in which a given clan trusts, the totem, the spirit (moea) of hail, of rain, of lightning, of disease. A Sutho woman can become a Tebele by marriage, though this seldom actually happens.

spirits, endowed with intelligence, feelings and will, and tries to induce them to respond to his needs, whilst, in the second case he trusts that his offering will act on them magically, i. e. automatically, according to the principles of magic explained above. Let us consider these two kinds of mhamba more closely. 782 778 779

1) *The gifts.* As regards their nature these are indeed most varied, consisting in the first place of *domestic animals*, the ox, goat, fowl, which are only used by subjects, the sheep being the offering proper to the chief (p. 50). Pigs are not accepted for the altar, neither are antelopes, or other kinds of game. I have never heard of any offering consisting of the flesh of wild beasts. The victim is generally killed, but there are cases of its being consecrated *living*. If a living hen or goat is given to the gods, (a ring sometimes being attached to the leg of the fowl), it is taboo henceforth to kill or sell it; if it dies, it must not be eaten, and it must also be replaced by another (1). Another kind of living offering is the *human sacrifice* made in certain sacred woods in order to obtain rain, but this is rarely resorted to. "The victim wanders about in the forest till he dies," says Mboza; "the gods take him." 782

The most common kind of offering is *the produce of the fields*, chiefly the Kafir Corn in the official luma, but also other cereals, sorghum maize, likoro (p. 11), various kinds of pumpkins. Ground nuts are never offered. But the ancestor-gods appreciate drinks, not only the national beer, but also the wine of the Whites. They like narcotics as well as intoxicants, and tobacco is one of the gifts most frequently made to them.

Clothing, especially handkerchiefs of various designs (these designs being often prescribed by the bones) is often offered, even ornaments, e. g. the bracelet in the sacrifice for the uterine nephew (p. 396); but it is the sick boy who wears it, probably instead of the gods.

Lastly one sometimes finds on the graves "wealth, hlengwe,"

(1) I have heard of two cases of a *living human offering* in the Bileu and Manyisa regions. A girl had been consecrated to the ancestor-gods; she was therefore a mhamba. In the first case a goat had been given to them also, as a living mhamba. The girl died, and the goat ought to have been buried together with all her belongings, but her parents presented it to Christian Natives, who were free from the fear of the ancestor-gods.

782 elephants' tusks or hippopotamus teeth. (Nkolele). I never heard of any money being consecrated to the ancestor-gods, but generally speaking it may be said that most of the things which rejoice the heart of a human being may be placed on the altar and employed to win the favour of the ancestral spirits.

But what is *the actual value of these gifts*? All things considered, it must be confessed that it is very small. The sacrificing Jew made a burnt offering : he burnt the victim in order that Jehovah might be gratified with the smoke of the roasting flesh, which ascended to heaven! Nothing of this sort is met with amongst the Thongas. When the offering is a living one, there is actually a certain element of self-denial, in that the sacrificer renounces the possibility of eating it or selling it ; but the bones rarely order such offerings. Generally the offerings cost nothing. Thongas present their gods with a goat, but they eat it themselves. From each limb a small piece is cut ; this is enough for the gods, and the uterine nephews will steal even that. If the bones have ordered the sacrifice of an ox, it may happen that the officiating headman, having none to offer, will go to one of his neighbours who possesses an old, dry oxhide, and cut a small piece from it; this will serve as his ox. As for fowls, a feather or the bones are placed on the altar, but the meat is eaten by the people ; only, whether it be a fowl or a goat which is sacrificed, the animal must be in perfect condition ; it is not stated if this is in honour of the gods or for the satisfaction of the eaters. The same thing happens with regard to cereals. The bones frequently prescribe a mhamba called *byala bosila*. What is this? It is prepared as follows. The officiant takes a handful of maize grains and softens them by steeping them for a time in water. Then he stirs the mixture, takes a little in his mouth and exits his tsu. He may even content himself with the scum produced by this stirring. Nobody would eat byala bosila nor dare to offer it to a visitor. The particles of bran which remain in the sieve when beer is brewed are also quite good enough for the gods. But observe, said my informant, that thus no one, not even the poorest, will ever want for a mhamba to offer to his gods.

How is this to be explained? Mboza assured me that it was done to *deceive* (kanganyisa) the spirits of the ancestors, as if they

were still the wretched old people from whom the grandchildren used to steal their food (I. p. 132). But I doubt the truth of this explanation. The valueless nature of the offerings is rather due to the fact that Natives know perfectly well that the gods neither eat nor take what is offered to them, and that it is devoured by the fowls running about the place. When telling the story of the theophany described on p. 384, the old priest Nkolele made the following remark : "Even if one only kills a chicken, the god is quite content, for, to him, it has the same value as an ox." This seems to be the true explanation. The gods do not ask for real food, or wealth ; they only regard the "mhamba" as a token of love from their descendants, and a sign that these have not forgotten them, but will do their duty towards them (1). If this be the case, the offerings, which have little material worth, acquire a real religious or spiritual value. But it must be confessed that, although this may really have been the original idea, the chief anxiety of the worshippers now-a-days is to observe exactly the details of the *prescribed ritual*. This is what makes an offering acceptable, and not the disposition of the heart towards the gods.... It is possible that an offering may be refused by the gods. A worshipper may be "overcome" by his mhamba, and will then return home shivering, having only increased the anger of the spirits. Therefore, let the rules of the ritual be well observed, and especially the indications of the divinatory bones. 782

Some features of this ritual are most interesting, especially the *fau* so often mentioned, by which the offering is consecrated. What does it mean? The Natives themselves are unable to explain it, so we are reduced to mere supposition. It consists in an emission of saliva, generally mixed with something from the victim : some of the short feathers of the neck soiled with blood, in the case of a fowl, or a little psanyi also kneaded with blood, in that of a goat. But in the offering of bitterness (p. 391) there is

(1) In Chinese Ancestrolatry the same thing occurs. Worshippers do not offer their ancestors real money, etc., but paper representations, which they burn for the ancestors, thinking that the spirits of the various articles will enter the other world, and be accepted by the spirits of the deceased. Probably Bantu worshippers are unconsciously influenced by a similar idea.

782 merely saliva ; this, however, is a true "hahla," and this fact shows that the saliva is a gift, the *personal gift of the worshipper*. He first gives his gods something emanating from himself, mingling it with the blood or psanyi of the victim, and only then does he approach them. So there seems to be a deep meaning underlying this sacramental act, though most of the worshippers are not aware of it (a circumstance which unhappily occurs in all religions) ; though unconscious, it exists and has given rise to the rite ; the gift of oneself is necessary to obtain the favour of the Divinity. — What is the intention in adding the blood and psanyi? Is there any meaning in the *choice of the blood* which is mixed with saliva in order to despatch the offering to the gods (sungulisa mhamba)? Is the blood (ngati) regarded as containing the life of the animal, as was the case amongst the Jews, who used it in sacrifices "to cover the soul" or the sins of the worshipper (hence the idea of atonement)? There is no sign of a similar conception among the Thongas. It is true that they prefer to resort to sacrifices with blood in cases of misfortune, disease and death, when some idea of guilt may be entertained. The moral element, however, if it ever really existed, has entirely disappeared from the actual horizon of ancestrolatry.

782 783 On the other hand, the use of the *psanyi*, the half digested grass found in the shihlakahla stomach, is easier to explain. It is evidently a means of purification for the family, if not exactly from sin, at least from misfortune (khombo) ; hence their custom of washing their bodies with the green liquid extracted from it, a religious ceremony which to us seems very disgusting, but to the Natives quite clean, their ideas about dung being very different from ours (p. 38). A large ball of psanyi is put on the head of the bride after the dlaya shilongo ceremony (I. p. 257) in order to remove the dangers of consanguineous marriage, and so make it easier for her to have children. Pellets of this substance are thrown too at the uterine nephews, when they run away after stealing the offering (I. p. 162) ; or on to the roof of the deceased's hut, when this is officially closed, with the aim of removing the danger of death ; the slaughtered goat has thus to contribute to the restoration of peace and happiness to the family.

No special use is made of the *bones* of the victim, except, as we shall see later, in offerings on behalf of those possessed. The only part kept is the *astragalus*, or the *psirungulo* just described, which are tied to the person on whose behalf the sacrifice has been made, probably to insure for him a permanent blessing from the gods. 782 777

It must be observed that the sacrificial ritual, as well as the medical art, lays great stress on the *sex* of the offerings. As a rule, there must be opposition between the sex of the victim and that of the person for whom, or to whom, the sacrifice is made. A woman is prayed for by means of a he-goat or a cock, and a man by a she-goat or a hen. 782 755 562

What is the reason of this rule? — "Psi yaka muti," says my informant. "It builds up the village." As a village can only grow and multiply by the union of the male and the female element, so in order to succeed in any pursuit it is necessary to unite both sexes. This principle is universally applied : when a girl is ill, a boy will bring her medicine, and vice-versa. The rule is also followed in another case. It may be that a mhamba has been wrongly performed and threatens to bring misfortune instead of appeasing the gods. This mhamba must consequently be "quenched, timula" "so that it may keep quiet and cool down, because it might cause annoyance and overcome them" (Mboza). This will be done by offering a mhamba of the opposite sex, which will correct the first. So if a female nkanye twig has been employed in the funeral ceremony, when the ritual ought to have been performed with a twig taken from a male stem, the ceremony will be repeated with a male twig in order to quench the first mhamba.

The last observation to be made about the gifts presented to the ancestor-gods is that the *psirungulo*, viz. the part of the victim which is tied to the person for whose sake it has been sacrificed, must be attached to the left part of the body if this person belongs to the female, to the right if to the male sex ; moreover in the sacrifices offered to maternal gods, the attachment is always done on the left side, whatever may be the sex of the person. Why is this? Because the left side belongs to the woman, the right to the man. We have seen that this is the case in the hut (I. p. 187). 782 562

782 562 *Shimantji* is the term used for left ; its etymology is unknown. *Shinene* means right ; it also indicates nice, good, true. In this as in many other instances the male sex has arrogated to itself the better part!

782 789 778 2) *The magical objects used in worship.* First of all comes *the great mhamba*, the nails, hair or faces of deceased chiefs. We are evidently dealing here with a case of *communionist magic.* I explain in the same way the use of roots brought to light by a river which has washed away the ground (p. 387), but it may be that this is also an instance of *imitative magic* : the roots were hidden in the soil and have come to light ; in the same way the ancestor-gods have been buried in the ground and have again come forth to bless or curse their descendants. The curious astragalus bone of an antelope which had been swallowed by a hyena and found later in its stools and which Mankhelu employed to represent the gods in his divinatory set of bones, would favour this second explanation. In fact most of these objects are supposed to act in virtue of the principle of similarity : the nkanye twig, because this venerated tree will ensure respect to the person, living or dead, for whom it is used ; the piece of charcoal, because the enemy will be reduced to impotence just as the piece of wood has been consumed by fire ; the thorn employed by the general of the army, because the warriors will be able to pierce their opponents and kill them, etc. Is the number of magic objects used in this connection limited to those I have mentioned? I do not think so. It is probable that some others may be found in the various parts of the tribe. I even have proof that new objets of a magic character are still invented by worshippers who are gifted with special imaginative powers. My old friend Mankhelu was telling me the particulars of the battle of Nov. 1901, during the Sikororo war (I. p. 513), when suddenly jumping to his feet and taking a small bundle of grass, he said : "Listen! I will show you the mhamba I made when the enemy rushed on us. I took a bundle of grass like those which women use for binding their sticks, and feverishly separated the blades, saying : 'Let them fail to surround us, or decoy us!'. Then I scattered them in all directions and said : 'Let them be so dispersed, carried off and destroyed!' And this is exactly what happened.

On my return from the battle I showed all the army how I had prayed." The old general's spontaneous appeal to the gods on behalf of his country in its hour of supreme danger is indeed worthy of notice, and also furnishes a proof that ancestor-worship is still a living force and has not become a mere matter of ritual amongst those who practise it. This prayer of the Nkuna general, this exclamation of an anguished soul in the presence of a great danger, may be regarded as *verbal magic*, as it is not expressedly addressed to the gods, and the same may be said of the formula employed to cancel an oath in the offering of reconciliation, the mention of the gods being absent in this case also. All these acts, however, are mhamba. They are in reality accomplished with the idea that the gods hear and see what is said and done and will be induced to deliver their worshippers.

The magic character of these rites is most marked in the cases of communionist magic ; those which are classed under imitative magic may perhaps be more properly called *symbols*, or at least some of them (1).

Elias Libombo once came to me and said : "My brother, Klass, died. He was *the mhamba of the Libombos*. Now his younger

(1) But what is a *symbol* in religion, and what is the difference between the symbol and the magic rite? I cannot treat this important subject here in all the necessary detail and length. Let us take only one instance. The offering of incense which took place every evening in the Temple of Jerusalem and which is also widespread in certain branches of the Christian Church is regarded as a symbol. The perfumed smoke which ascends towards heaven corresponds to the prayers of the worshippers, which are thought of as ascending to God and pleasing Him, just as the agreeable smell of incense gratifies the nostrils of the man who perceives it. But in the Hebrew religion it is not thought that incense conveys prayers to God in some actual and magical fashion. It is a symbol. Psychologically speaking this use of incense is probably to be explained in the following manner: The material representation of a religious act (or a religious truth) tends to induce in the worshipper a stronger faith in the efficacy of the act or the reality of the truth. His soul thus finds satisfaction in the performance of the symbolic act through which he feels himself brought into closer communion with his God. It is easy to understand that in the course of the religious evolution, a higher conception of God should have caused the magic act to evolve into the symbol, and that the symbol itself should be abandoned or reduced to a minimum when the idea of God has become perfectly spiritualised and communion with the Father who is in Heaven is realized without any external and intermediary means. A comparison of the great mhamba with the relics of saints or other relics used in certain religions would probably show a similar type of evolution.

Some scientists believe that religious evolution contained a *preanimistic phase*, in which the worship of spirits had not yet come into existence, and in which primitive man employed only magic means to influence the supernatural powers. This

brother will be so called." Nkolele, the father of these two men, was the Libombo mhamba before them. This is another meaning of this great word mhamba. Klass was neither a gift made to the ancestor-gods of the Libombos, nor a magic object employed to win their favour, but he was the elder member of the family, the one who was the official and indispensable intermediary between all the Libombos and their gods. For this reason he was a mhamba. This leads me to propose the following definition of the word : *A mhamba is any object or act or even person which is used to establish a bond between the gods and their worshippers.*

Having thus analysed all the elements contained in the Thonga mhamba, we may safely conclude that its spiritual and religious value cannot be denied. Whatever place ritual may hold in the ceremonies of ancestrolatry, whatever mixture of devotional and magic elements may be found in them, the offering is not a mere external gift which appeases the gods by its material value, nor a simple means of coercion which forces them to submit to the will of the worshipper. By means of the mhamba the Thonga really aims at entering into relationship with those powerful spirits who control his life (1).

may be true, but as regards Bantus, they have long outgrown this stage. Even when they have recourse to magic processes in order to influence their ancestor-gods, these have a distinctive character, different from that of the ordinary magic which they practise when they wish to affect the impersonal forces of Nature. Everything done in order to obtain the favour of the ancestor-gods is a *mhamba*, not a *muri*, as I have already pointed out.

(1) Religious and magic practices are more or less mingled in Thonga ritual and it is evident that the smaller the degree of magic contained in a rite, the more genuine religious feeling there will be in it. I owe to my Vende informant the description of a sacrifice performed in his tribe for a sick child, where the two elements are combined to an extraordinary extent. It is called *the offering of the goat with clothes* (mbudzi ya u dzwindisa).

A goat is provided. It is placed before a basin of water mixed with certain drugs and forced to drink, to drink till it is fully distended, and dies. It is then skinned and cut open. The large intestine is extracted from the body, and a part of it is cut off and stitched up at one end so as to form a kind of pouch. From each limb a bit of meat is taken, and a provision of the seeds of various cereals, brought to the spot together with drugs. All these different kinds of food are introduced into the pouch, the process of filling it being accompanied by prayers to the ancestor-god. The officiant, whilst proceeding with his task, puts seeds into the goat's intestine with one hand, and, with the other, takes other seeds and places them apart. These he will keep carefully in order to sow them later on. And continually he prays: "Eat your fill and be satisfied, and leave us some for our use." Thus the ancestor-god has been fed, well and duly stuffed. The pouch is then stitched at its other end. But now the ancestor-god must be clothed

c) Prayers.

The act of prayer is called *khongota* (Ro.), *khongela* (Dj.) (the same word being also employed to mean "supplicate"); or *bulabulela*, to speak to, or scold the gods; *bukutjela* means a long, meandering prayer in which the officiant says the same thing over and over again. I have given twenty-two different forms of prayer when describing the manifold religious acts of the Thongas: two prayers of medicine men (I. 55, II. 393); those pronounced on the day of marriage (I. p. 111); of death, with the nkanye twig (I. p. 142); in the ceremony of crushing down the hut (I. 161); at the distribution of the widows (I. 208); at the death of a sister (I. 216); in the ceremony of killing the tie of consanguinity (I. 258); on journeys (I. p. 340. II. p. 394, 398); on offering the first fruits (I. 396); before the tjeba fishing (II. p. 87); when sneezing (II. 361); on offering tobacco at the altar (II. p. 390); for a sick nephew (II. p. 396); at the sacrifice of reconciliation (II. p. 399); at the worship of the Makaringe family (II. p. 403);

782 ●

also! A strap is cut from the goat's skin and the sacrificer winds it all round the pouch. Carrying the offering with him he now goes to the grave of the grandfather, digs, and lays the pouch in the earth parallel to the body beneath; he then prays again: "We worship you, grandfather! And we have clothed you. This is your food. Eat and be full and be contented. And leave us food, plenty of food that we also may be contented, and bless the sick child." 782 789 755

Let us try to analyse this rite according to the ideas of magic which we have explained, p. 369. We are dealing here with the ancestor-god complexus. A goat is provided, a gift made. This is religion. This goat has now become one of the possessions of the ancestor-god, a part of him. Henceforth the goat represents the god and an action performed upon it will be at the same time performed on the god. The goat is filled with water to quench the thirst of the god. A pouch is made of the intestine, a part of the animal which will now represent the whole, and food is introduced into it to feed the god. All these acts are instances of *communionist magic*, and the prayer which accompanies them is the religious element of the sacrifice. Some seeds are put apart to be sown later on. As they belonged to the provision made for the offering, these seeds partake of the nature of the whole of that provision; they have entered into the ancestor-god complexus; they are therefore particularly suitable for sowing, since the blessing of the powerful god will rest upon them. This is communionist magic again, whilst the filling up of the goat with water and food and the clothing its intestine with a strap may be regarded as *imitative magic*. The placing of the pouch in the grave facing the same way as the body of the ancestor once more signifies the identity of both, and the sacrificer is definitely persuaded that by all these rites he has really exercised a strong and compelling influence on his god (See my paper on "Some Features of the Religion of the Ba-Venda" *S. A. Journal of Science*, April 1921).

782 in the offering of charcoal (II. p. 391); of valour (II. p. 405); see also Mankhelu's prayers before the battle (II. p. 418), and Nkolele's invocation in the Libombo wood (II. p. 384).

Most of these prayers have an *extremely liturgical* character; all know what must be said on each occasion of regular sacrifice; the personal element is almost totally wanting. Here are the principal parts of a typical prayer.

After the consecration of the offering with the sacramental *tsu*, a kind of *dedication*, the officiant sometimes begins with the words: "Abusayi! Akhwari!", or "Ibusayi! Ikhwari!" These words mean: Gently! Smoothly! They are pronounced with a gentle intonation as if to express deep feeling. According to Mboza the worshipper wishes to say: "I am not angry with you!" "It is the *tisola* of the heathen," said the same informant. Tisola, in the Christian language of the Thongas, means to humble or condemn oneself in asking for forgiveness.

Then comes the *invocation*. If the sacrifice is on behalf of a sick person, the god to whom the offering is made, he having been designated by the bones as the cause of the misfortune, is called, and asked to bring thither all the other gods whom he had induced to aid him in punishing the patient; or the priest may call first his own father, and entreat him to go and bring his grandfather, the latter to bring his progenitor, and so on till the last named. The ancestors in the main line are then sent to call all the great-uncles, and all the deceased of collateral lines. Or, if praying for the welfare of the country, the officiant will address his remotest ancestor first, because it was he who gave the land to his descendants, and then proceed to call the son and grandson of this ancient founder of the dynasty, continuing the succession of generations until he reaches his own father. It seems as if it were desired to have as many gods as possible present at the ceremony. The gods of the father's family may also be summoned, if the sacrifice is made to the gods of the mother's (p. 396).

The *petition* follows the invocation, and this naturally differs with circumstances. At the luma sacrifice (January) the priest asks the gods to increase the produce of the fields. At the family

gatherings, after a death, the elder brother entreats the gods to bless the family, to prevent bad feeling, or strife, to give wisdom and strength to the new headman, that he may be successful in his rule over the village (1). 782

When some great misfortune is the occasion for this religious act being performed, the petition is preceded, or followed, by a regular *insulting* of the gods. There are two words used to designate this curious part of the prayer : *holobela*, or *holobisa*, to scold the gods, or *rukatela*, the actual word for "to insult." There is an instance of this strangely impertinent manner of addressing the gods in the sacrifice for the sick nephew (p. 396). These insults are generally uttered while the priest is squeezing the psanyi over the shoulders of his subordinates.

The last part of the prayer is *its sudden termination*, when one of the uterine nephews puts a portion of the victim into the officiant's mouth, thus "cutting his oration" (tjema). This is a true part of the ritual. When the victim is a hen, it is the gizzard, which has been half roasted during the long prayer, that is used for this purpose. The priest eats it, and so is the first to partake of the flesh of the offering.

Prayers to the ancestors do not show very much religious feeling, and are, at any rate, absolutely devoid of awe. Whilst 782 769

(1) *Music* plays no part in Thonga religious ritual. During the preparation of the offering those present often sing, but these songs are those which accompany the ordinary dances and bear no religious character. I only once heard of a true sacred chant. Mungomane, the distinguished dancer and musician who made his living by the exercise of his art in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques (p. 167) told me that when he presided over the worship in his village, he used to *sing his prayer*. He gave me the words, but unfortunately not the notes. They are worth quoting : 781 533 776

"Let the meat not stick in your throats ! Eat, you chiefs, you ancestor-gods... They are coming (the oxen) ; they see me, whilst I mourn you, my father and my mother, whilst I remain outside, where I receive life from you, who are below ; I remain, I am a miserable wretch.

"The oxen are slain ! Slay the oxen ! Here they are. I mourn you. Let us eat them together, you father and mother. Give me life and give it also to my children. Let us eat these oxen which I possess, but I possess them for you. Let us not suffer from complaints of the chest here in our home.

"This is the song by which we accompany you, as you return below. Let us remain in good health."

At a given moment the uterine nephew answered by saying :

"I magnify you, my father ! You shall see me, father and mother !"

And all those present, seeing that they would have plenty of meat to eat, joined in a chorus of praise, clapping their hands.

782 sacrificing, the Natives laugh, talk in loud tones, dance, sing
769 obscene songs, even interrupt the prayer with their remarks,
781 and insult each other about family matters. The officiant himself
533 sits on the seat designated by the bones, and speaks in a monoto-
776 nous manner, looking straight in front of him with utter indifference. There is nothing in his demeanour which denotes fear. An exception must perhaps be made in the case of those members of the Makaringe family who clapped their hands during the prayer in the same manner as when saluting "bakonwana" (p. 402). They have as much respect for the ancestor-gods as for their relatives-in-law, and that is, indeed, saying much. I have heard that in the Maputju country people kneel down during the prayer. In Nondwane women alone kneel, whilst the men sit on their heels, the customary attitude in worship (1). If the gods were actually old people, still living, they could not be addressed with more familiarity. This leads us finally to consider in what the divinity of the ancestor-gods consists.

d) The Divine Nature of the Ancestor-Gods.

776 I have brought together in a preceding paragraph (p. 372-386)
769 all that the Natives say about their gods. Now let us return to them, after having studied the religious ritual, and ask : What

(1) The Ma-Lemba, that curious tribe settled amongst the Thongas and Vendas of Spelonken which has certain Semitic customs (I p. 73) are much more respectful towards their ancestor-gods. They have prayer meetings at which the old men of many families assemble together ; one of them, he who knows the ancestors best, leads the others in prayer, "quoting all their mountains" viz. all the sacred hills where the ancestors have been buried, and at the end of each sentence they all answer : "hundjiii..." When the prayer is finished, they each raise an arm and say : "Amen !" This is one of the customs borrowed by them from the Semitic populations with which they came into contact in former times. When they heard Christians pronouncing the same word to conclude their prayers, they were very much astonished. One of them told me ; "This shows that we were Christians formerly and have become back-sliders." One of their formulae when praying is as follows. "You, so and so and so, help us and enable us to reach Mudzimu." Mudzimu is the name by which they designate the Supreme Being in whom they believe and of whom they say : "All that you eat, it is Mudzimu who gives it to you !" If a child refuses to obey, they say to him : "Mudzimu will see you !" For them the ancestor-gods are but intermediaries between themselves and Mudzimu. They often call themselves Basilamusi, Moslems, and claim that there were Moslems belonging to their tribes (A ba ri ba ka hina).

evident consciousness of his talent and powers that he explained to me the uses of his medicines.

But the most distinguished medicine-man I ever met was old *Mankhelu*, who may be looked upon as one of the masters of the profession in the Thonga tribe. "It is no play, what I am doing! I have beaten an ox (i. e. made a present of an ox) to my maternal uncle Hlomendhlen! I even gave him two oxen, and he taught me his medical art! He led me everywhere, showing me all his drugs." So Mankhelu became a regular ñanga, in addition to being a diviner, a master of the art of throwing bones, a rain-maker, a counsellor, and general of the army. His whole family shared his professional character, and helped him in his work. Every year, at the time of bukanye, the drugs had to be renewed. His wives went all over the bush to dig out the medicinal roots and to collect them in their *lihlelo* baskets (p. 123). On their return home the bones were consulted to find out who was to cut the roots in pieces (gemela). This having been done, they pounded them in their mortars ; a portion of this material was dried outside, and reduced to powder without having been cooked ; these were the *male medicines*. The other portion was roasted in pieces of broken pots, burnt until it was like charcoal, ground and made into a black powder ; these were the *female medicines*. The whole village assembled and inhaled the smoke through reeds during the operation. A goat was killed and a sacrifice performed ; the liquid contained in the *psanyi* (p. 410) was squeezed on the burning drugs to put them out ; a little bukanye beer was also used for the same purpose. In the meantime Mankhelu said "*tsu*," and addressed this prayer to his gods, and especially to the ancestor who had taught him his science :

"You! so and so! Let these drugs of yours rise (pfuka, i. e. find new strength). Let people come from the Zulus, from Mosilekatse, from Mpfumu! Let them think of our leaves (matluka, the common name for drugs). Let them bring elephant tusks, marriageable girls, etc. Let them dream of us!"

This operation of renewing the drugs aims at giving them new strength. Mankhelu said : "We let our drugs *luma* for

seeing grains of Kafir corn, which are of a dark colour. Grains of mealies are softened in water, pierced through and made into necklaces which patients wear round their necks, whilst the spikes of Kafir corn, which are to be found in every hut fixed to the reeds of the roof as seeds for the next season, are carefully taken away and hidden somewhere in the bush during the whole time of the epidemic. Should the malignant form of small-pox develop notwithstanding all these precautions, the headman will shake his head and tell the parents of the patient: "Hahlani! — Make an offering." But in this particular hahla no real offering will be made, and the prayer will not be addressed to the ancestor-gods. The principal words of this prayer are: "Mavuzane, dhlula!" These are Zulu expressions which correspond in Ronga to: "Mabutise, tlula!" i. e. "Questioner, pass on your way!" Who is this Questioner? It is small-pox itself, Nyedzana, which is more or less personified and looked on as a real and terrible visitor coming at given intervals to examine the country and search for sinners. The great sin which Questioner especially wishes to discover is *buloyi*, murder by witchcraft. Let the patient then confess the acts of bewitchment which he has committed, and he will be spared. If he conceals them, small-pox will kill him. Suppose that the patient so seriously ill is a grown-up woman, the wife of one of the men of the village. Her parents will first be called. The headman and all the inmates of the village will attend the meeting in the hut. "Confess your guilt!" they will all say to the woman. She may answer: "No! I am not a witch" *(A ndi noyi!)* They insist: "Do not hide anything." And under the strain of their questions she may say: "Yes! I am a walker in the night! I have eaten so-and-so! I have eaten my own child!" If the patient is a little child, his father will have to make the confession in his stead. He will take the infant in his arms and say: "Mavuzane dhlula! Questioner, pass on your way! Yes! We are baloyi. I have taught my child to eat human bodies! But we will not persist in our bad doings! Go away and leave us in peace!" (1).

(1) We have here one of the cases in which an impersonal force of Nature is treated as if it were a personal being endowed with superhuman power, and invoked. The prayer

755 When the disease has run its course, and the pustules have dried
783 up, a day is appointed on which the marginal period will come to an end, and the clan return to its regular life. This return is marked by the special *Reintegration and Purification rites*, which aim at removing the defilement acquired by the disease. The main purificatory rite, that which regularly closes a marginal period, is *the smearing of all the huts* with a new layer of clay, either mixed with cow's dung or not. The old ground is for ever covered. It is a way of saying : "Behold, the former things are passed away, everything has become new." On the morning of that day, every patient must go and wash his body *on the road*, as if to pour all the filth of the disease on to it. Moreover, the ashes found in the fire-places inside the huts, the necklaces of mealie grains, the implements used by the people who have been seriously ill, sometimes their garments, the ochre with which they anointed themselves, all the things which were employed in connection with the scourge, are collected and thrown indiscriminately on to the large paths, preferably on the places where two roads cross each other, a rite which is by no means altruistic, and still less antiseptic! We shall see shortly how it is to be explained.

828 *Nervous diseases* are peculiarly feared by Natives. *Melancholia*
755 is believed to be caused by those spirits of possession which will form the subject of the next paragraph. *Idiocy* has no remedy ; nothing can be done with an idiot : "It is death! It has found him!" (Mankhelu). *Delirium* (mihahamo) is cured by *Mbulula khutla*. The patient must enter the hole from which clay is taken for smearing the huts, and is washed with a decoction of the drug when in this hole. Moreover a stick of the same tree is cut and kept in the roof of the hut, and the person who sleeps with the patient will take it every night and place it near his head. "Thus we kill delirium." (Mankhelu)! — Another form of insanity is called *rihuhe*, "the disease which comes from far away with the winds" — "ri pfa timhehwen" (Mankhelu). A drug is prepared with the *shiromo* root, mixed with the lung of a sheep and the blood

782 to Small-Pox (with capital letters) may be compared with that pronounced when an imprecation has been uttered or when someone wishes to cancel his oath (p. 399).

Another rite, which is observed after the hondlola only, is
756 the *haza*, viz., the monthly purification of the exorcist. He
783 fills his gobo calabash with a decoction made of the roots of the
821 mphesu and ntjebe trees, drinks the whole, tickles his throat with a feather and vomits the medicine. "A tibasisa ndjen" — "he purifies his inside." This is done at every new moon. The connection between the possessed and the moon, which was first established by the fact that he had *thwaza*[1] as well as the moon, is maintained and intensified by this rite.

2) Propitiatory rites.

751 Besides these protective drugs, the exorcised wears a necklace
756 made of little pieces of a creeper called *mayambatju*, tied together with a munganazi string. See the second necklace in the
782 illustration. This is intended *to calm his gods*, and to scatter
158 them when they desire to come upon him with violence. This is indeed a great danger ; the exorcised is liable to nervous attacks of a dangerous nature, especially during the first few weeks following the exorcism. Perhaps his song is heard in the distance. Then suddenly he is seized with madness, and furiously assaults his neighbours with the small hatchet, or the assagay used in the dances. People run away ; or, on the contrary, they collect and begin to clap their hands, and make their infuriated companion dance and sing his own song. This may help to dispel the spirits, and calm him down. Sometimes, feeling uneasy, foreseeing a crisis, the poor man himself asks them to sing. But he may also be led, in his frenzy, to the bush, far away, unconscious, quite mad, tearing his clothes and his skin with the thorns. This often happened to Ñwashinhwana. Her husband then followed her, and, when the crisis was over, saw her fall down exhausted and brought her home ; there, having returned to her senses, she became very sad and wept bitterly. So, in order to avoid being tormented, the exorcised propitiate their spirits ; they worship them, in truth, and this gives birth to *a new religion* totally different from ancestrolatry, which has its rites and its duties.

756 As already pointed out, the exorcised has *his own altar* in his
778 hut. It is the forked branch, round which a circle of raised clay
782

[1] [See p. 495 -- Analyst]

is carefully maintained, and regularly smeared. He puts his offerings there, principally tobacco. The snuff box is deposited there. Does he want snuff? He enters the hut clapping his hands, saluting his spirits, and, taking the box, throws a pinch of it at the foot of the branch, and says: "You! Ngoni, you see that I have not stolen! I first gave you your share." His wife will do the same. This is a "mhamba." — When ready to undertake a journey, he will come to the altar, sit on his ankles (a woman will kneel down) and take leave of the spirits. Holding his assagay, and his manono root, he says: "Good-bye, Ba-Ngoni! This hut is yours; keep it well! I go to such and such a place," and asks them to bless his journeying. On his return he will inform the spirits that he has succeeded in his trip. If he is sick, and the bones have revealed that the disease has been caused by the spirits, he again comes to the altar, and says: "You! Ba-Ngoni, why are you angry with me?" These acts of worship are not only performed at the altar. Wherever he may be, before drinking beer, the exorcised will pour out a little for his spirits. He will also throw a little food for them before eating. This will be *a daily worship*, much more constant and individual than the rites of ancestrolatry, a real communion with the spirits who, after having tormented the exorcist, have become his benefactors, giving him the power of healing others and thus of making money! There is much more religiosity in the exorcised than in ordinary people.

3) Development of subliminal faculties.

All these nervous crises, natural or provoked, the double psychological existence which is fostered by them, the regular participation in the exorcism of others, generally greatly injure the mind of the exorcised; they have an extraordinary look, something wild about them, as if they were not in their right senses. They may be heard sometimes groaning, or emitting a sudden cry without any reason. This nervous instability may pass away and they may return to their normal state, but it may be that if they possess those strange mental powers, which modern psychology